SUBSTANCE

OF THE

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT,

On the 23d and 31st of JANUARY, 1799:

INCLUDING

A correct Copy of the PLAN,

WITH THE

DEBATE which took Place in the House of Commons

On the PROPOSAL for an

UNION between GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND.

To which are annexed,

The celebrated SPEECHES of the Right Honourable JOHN FOSTER, late Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Speaker of the House of Commons of Ireland, on the 12th and 15th Days of August 1785, upon the COMMERCIAL PROPOSITIONS.

DUBLIN:

LESHAW, 108, GRAFTON-STREET.

1799.

HOUSE OF COMMONS;

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1799.

MR. PITT ſpoke to the following effect:—"Sir, after the inclination which has been manifeſted by the Houſe to come to a deciſion on the queſtion before them, I ſhould feel it my duty to offer ſome apology for riſing to delay that deciſion, but as ſome difference of opinion is likely to take place in the minds of Gentlemen, and the point under conſideration is ſo intimately connected with the ſafety and proſperity of the Britiſh empire, though I do not think it neceſſary to enter fully into the important details which the ſubject naturally ſuggeſts, I cannot paſs over with indifference ſeveral topics which have been alluded to in the courſe of the Honourable Gentleman's ſpeech. The Honourable Gentleman in bringing forward his amendment, has appeared to me to furniſh but one argument in ſupport of the concluſion which he labours to eſtabliſh, namely, that there is no power which can make the reſult of the deliberation for adjuſting the reciprocal intereſts of both countries effectual. He has taken upon himſelf the taſk of denying to the Parliament of either kingdom the right of incorporating one country with another. With reſpect to the publication which he has undertaken to refute, that is a ſubject to which the Houſe cannot attend; but how does the Honourable Gentleman's denial of the right of the Parliaments of both kingdoms ſtand? If the Parliament of Ireland has no right to incorporate itſelf with the legiſlature of this country, without the ſenſe of the people of Ireland, as little has the Parliament of Great Britain a right to follow the ſame meaſure with that of Ireland, as little had the Parliament of Scotland a right to agree to the terms of the Union which had been effected, as little had the Parliament of England a right to ratify that Union, under which England has ſo eminently flouriſhed, under which our laws and liberties have proſpered, have been extended and confirmed, in defiance of every check and obſtacle; under which Great Britain has increaſed in opulence, in power, and glory, and has become at once the admiration and envy of the world. If there be any truth or any conſiſtency in the Honourable Gentleman's denial of the right which he challenges, then all the ſolid and beneficial eſtabliſhments which have been carried into effect ſince the period of the Union, muſt give way and fall to the ground. Even the Honourable Gentleman would, according to his own argument, ſtand here unauthorized, unqualified to deliver his ſentiments in this Houſe. For if we admit his poſition to be juſt, it evidently follows, that there is no one act which has been performed by us for theſe 90 years paſt, in which we have acted

legitimately and conſtitutionally; and, in fact, we could not at this moment ſit here as a legiſlative Body. I cannot deviſe by what means, or by what ingenious reſources the Honourable Gentleman can ſupport his ſtatement, and it ſeems that his allies are hitherto unknown. I have, however, learnt from the newſpapers, that the Honourable Gentleman has at leaſt one ally in his very extraordinary propoſition. A certain perſon has publicly declared, that every citizen of both countries ſhould come forward and deliver his opinion on the preſent occaſion; and that without the ſenſe of the aggregate bodies of the kingdom, the Parliament of Great Britain could not diſcuſs nor determine the preſent momentous queſtion. According to this plan, which appears to coincide with the ſentiments of the Honourable Gentleman, every citizen was to ſtand forth with his reaſons, and vote in numerical progreſſion, and the Legiſlature were, in the mean time, patiently to wait for the reſult of the whole. If we are to go back to the elements of Jacobiniſm, I muſt admit the argument of the Hon. Gentleman to be juſt, and we are, conſequently, no longer a Parliament. But I muſt do him the juſtice to ſay, that I am perſuaded he entertains no ſuch opinion, and if he does not, there is of courſe an end to that topic. With reſpect to the competence of Parliament to carry the meaſure into effect there does not exiſt a doubt; and if the competence of either or both Parliaments be fully admitted, let us ſee how ſtands the queſtion in your hands, as well as the amendment of the Hon. Gentleman. He complains, Sir, that the addreſs of thanks to His Majeſty was moved by my Right Honourable friend near me, and ſeconded by me as a matter of courſe. But why did we purſue that conduct? Was it becauſe we were not aware of the difficulties attending it; becauſe we were not appriſed of the indiſpenſible neceſſity of mature and minute inveſtigation?—No, Sir!—but becauſe we did not think it right to agitate a queſtion of ſuch tranſcendent importance on the bare mention of it; becauſe we conceived that it would be premature to bring forward for diſcuſſion, a topic, the outlines of which were unknown; becauſe we could not conſiſtently with our duties to the public, agree to ſubmit to conſideration, a ſubject ſo deeply intereſting in its relations and operations, until it was ſtated fairly and openly in all its various details to the Houſe. But the Hon. Gentleman has gone farther, and talked of a wiſh to carry it by ſurpriſe. I do not heſitate to ſay, that if any blame be imputable to us, it is that of having acted with too much caution. It has been diſtinctly recommended from the throne, to adopt ſuch ſalutary meaſures as might improve and perpetuate a connection eſſential to the common ſecurity and intereſts of both countries. We only ſtated, in conformity to that communication, the time of laying before the Houſe the materials neceſſary for forming an opinion, and added, that a proper interval would take place before we took the ſenſe of Parliament. I certainly thought that the Hon. Gentleman would have candidly allowed the fairneſs of our conduct, and have done juſtice to our deſire, ſo clearly aſcertained, of treating the ſubject with all the importance and deliberation to which it is ſo peculiarly entitled.—In ſhort, the queſtion now is, ſhall we, after the expiration of a proper interval, diſcuſs and come to a determination

termination upon the ſubject, or ſhall we in the firſt inſtance, and in the mere outſet of the buſineſs, without taking a juſt review of the conſiderations on both ſides, without entering into the eſſential points that are connected with, and muſt influence our deciſion, poſitively declare, that the meaſure is either unneceſſary to the ſecurity and happineſs of Ireland, or ſo impracticable in its operation, as to prevent any hopes of realizing it? With regard to the amendment, I ſhall ſay a few words preſently. It is enough for us to ſay, we bring forward a propoſition in our opinion ſuitable to the preſent ſtate of Ireland. We do no more. We do not aſk for immediate diſcuſſion. But Sir, what is the Hon. Gentleman's conduct? he ſays, without conſidering the ſubject in any point of view as it relates to this country or to Ireland, "I will enter upon no enquiry whatever." Now, Sir, he is bound, according to this ſyſtem of acting, to make out to our conviction, either that the ſtate of Ireland is ſo completely ſatisfactory, that we may repoſe with ſafety, and that, conſequently the propoſed arrangement is ſuperfluous, or it is incumbent on him to point out ſome other mode of a more ſalutary and efficacious nature. Has he, then, I am authorized to demand, made out any ſuch caſe? I anſwer, no! Does Ireland ſtand in need of a remedy? I have heard nothing but complaints of the miſerable and diſtreſſed ſituation of Ireland from the Hon. Gentleman and his party for a long time paſt. They have reiterated and ſtudiouſly expatiated upon the wretched condition to which that country was reduced; they have bitterly inveighed againſt the miſtakes and errors of its Government; they have deſcribed in the moſt alarming terms the horrors which it was condemned to ſuffer; they have anxiouſly ſtarted difficulties and raiſed objections againſt every word that went to extenuate the painful diſtreſſes which they related. What has the Hon. Gentleman ſeen in the condition of Ireland ſince that day, to cauſe ſo material an alteration in his opinion? What has he diſcovered ſince that day to induce him to retract his declarations, and impreſs him with a conviction, that Ireland is ſo ſecure, ſo happy, and ſo proſperous, as to render every kind of remedy unneceſſary. He has ſeen a rebellion raging with inveterate fury, and aiming a deadly blow at the connexion between that country and Great Britain. He has ſeen that rebellion cruſhed, and the Government of Ireland left ſtanding in ſecurity. The Hon. Gentleman ſeems to forget that he found no difficulty then in blaming the Parliament of Ireland, yet he comes forward now and is as profuſe of his praiſes on it, as he was before laviſh in his cenſure. He cannot, therefore, have ſeen any thing ſince that period to juſtify this extraordinary and unaccountable dereliction of ſentiment. The evils and calamities with which Ireland is afflicted lie deep in the ſituation of the country. They are to be attributed to the manners of its inhabitants, to the ſtate of ſociety, to the habits of the people at large, to the unequal diſtribution of property, to the want of civilized intercourſe, to the jarring diſcord of party, and above all, to the prejudices of religious ſects. The Hon. Gentleman ſays, we cannot cure them all in a day. If they could be cured ſo, they might be cured by the Parliament of Ireland, by Parliamentary Reform or Catholic emancipation. But if the deplorable

plorable ſituation of the country can only be cured by gradual, ſober, and diſpaſſionate improvement and civilization; if much of it that is juſtly complained of can only be remedied by the circulation of capital, by the ſocial intercourſe naturally flowing from improved trade and commerce, by the diffuſion of ſocial habits, by the diſcrimination of liberal ſentiment, by removing party diſtractions, by ſuppreſſing factious aſſociations, by allaying hereditary feuds ſubſiſting between two nations living in the ſame Iſland, and by the extinction of religious prejudices, we muſt look to it in the proviſions of an independent Legiſlature removed from the immediate ſeat of theſe evils, which ſhall not be partial to either party, but the fair arbiter and kind parent of both; which ſhall not be liable to local influence, nor be ſubject to popular incitement, and which ſhall be fully competent to make head againſt the lawleſs inroads of deſtructive innovation and anarchy. Where then, Sir, is this gradual and effectual remedy to be found, while the Legiſlature remains in that country, and muſt, from the parts which compoſe it, partake of the ſpirit of either party? If, therefore, the Hon. Gentleman looks to Ireland for a Legiſlature calculated to apply a radical cure to the calamities which are manifeſt, he will not find it there. If he looks to the imperfection of the Conſtitution of Ireland, as I admit, does he contend that the Parliament of Ireland is as well adapted to have that degree of connexion and union with the great maſs of the people as the Parliament of Great Britain? Will he ſeriouſly maintain that the deſired remedy is to be hazarded in that country?—The wildeſt ſpeculation, the moſt extravagant flight of modern political theory in all its new fangled doctrines, attempted in any other country, would be more likely to be crowned with ſucceſs, and more reconcileable to reaſon than ſuch a propoſition. It would upon every principle of common ſenſe be ſuperior to it. I do not deny that even the deformed reſemblance of the Britiſh Conſtitution is ſuperior to any proceeding from the new ſyſtem, but the imperfection of the Iriſh Conſtitution is admitted, and to that muſt be added the complicated grievances and defects in the ſtate of the country at large. With reſpect to the want of a diffuſion of property, to the extraordinary diſparity of rank, and to the ſcanty means of ſocial improvement, all producing in a proportionate degree miſery in one extreme and oppreſſion in the other—how can theſe grievances be remedied but by a cloſer connexion with Great Britain, which is ſuperior to every other nation in every thing that conſtitutes the independence, wealth, and civilization of a State? The ſituation of Ireland muſt alſo be remedied by the influx of capital and the circulation of wealth, and whence are theſe neceſſary ingredients to be ſupplied but by aſſimilating it with Great Britain, which enjoys a portion of practical bleſſings ſuperior to any other country in the world? If theſe ſtatements be correct, I am authorized in maintaining, that according to the principles advanced by the Hon. Gentleman himſelf, nothing can tend more completely to redreſs the unhappy and diſtracted ſtate of Ireland, than uniting, blending, and conſolidating its intereſts and views with thoſe of Great Britain. Therefore, Sir, upon the Hon. Gentleman's principles it is not only a meaſure worthy of conſide-

ration,

ration, but a ſpecific remedy for the ſpecific evils of which he complains. He does not ſcruple to tell us, and wiſhes Parliament to record, that the final adjuſtment with Ireland in 1782, has been found incompetent to ſettle every difference, and he told us yeſterday, that he wiſhed to perpetuate the connexion between Great Britain and Ireland; but I am not content with ſaying, that the connexion ſhall be perpetuated, and that Ireland ſhall form a part of the Britiſh Empire, but I wiſh ſhe ſhould participate in all the bleſſings, enjoy her juſt ſhare of all the diſtinguiſhed happineſs of every part of the Britiſh Empire, and conſolidate the ſtrength and energy of the whole. I do not merely ſay let Ireland be united, let her be blended with us, but let her partake of every ſolid beneſit, of every eminent advantage that can reſult from ſuch an incorporation. The queſtion then is, how are theſe great objects to be attained? When the connexion with Ireland was ſomething more than a name, when that connexion was aſcertained, and the Imperial Parliament of this country exerciſed a ſupremacy over Ireland, it did happen, that during that period the narrow policy of Great Britain, influenced with views of trade and commercial advantages, tainted and perverted with ſelfiſh motives, treated Ireland with partiality and neglect, and never looked upon her growth and proſperity as the growth and proſperity of the empire at large. I reprobated as much as the Hon. Gentleman, that narrow-minded policy as miſchievous and pregnant with the moſt fatal conſequences to both kingdoms. Thus a ſyſtem radically defective exiſted, but another was ſubſtituted in its place. One branch, that of the Executive Power, was left the ſame in both countries; but there were alſo left two independent Parliaments without any permanent tie between them, and that at a time when every honeſt Engliſhman and every honeſt Iriſhman ſincerely wiſhed the connexion might be drawn cloſer. The countries were left in a ſituation of intimacy which the breath of accident might at all times deſtroy. They were liable to be ſeparated by a thouſand accidents which no human foreſight or wiſdom could prevent. It is now the duty of both Legiſlatures to render their happineſs mutual and permanent. I am now, Sir, about to notice that which has been alluded to by the Hon. Gentleman as a final adjuſtment; and I can undertake to ſtate, that this final adjuſtment was made under the pretence of redreſſing exiſting grievances, without looking to future conſequences, or taking a general and neceſſary view of circumſtances—it was dictated by the ſpirit of momentary popularity, and was not founded in the ſolid intereſts of the country. Having created two diſtinct Parliaments equally able and competent to decide and dictate on queſtions of peace and war, on all points of trade and commerce—it left them as divided in all material points about which nations may conteſt as any two Powers on the Continent. That ſuch was the iſſue of that arrangement cannot now be denied, and I can therefore maintain, without incurring the riſque of contradiction, that there is no reaſon whatever for calling it a final adjuſtment. Such, however, was the boaſted atchievement of the great patriots who took the lead in the emancipation of Ireland. The fabric which they had raiſed was popular,

pular, but the very men who raiſed it knew it was not ſound. They looked at their work, and they ſaw it was imperfect. One of theſe great patriots was gratified with a large donation from his country, and the other was celebrated in the publications of the day. When the Act was paſſed which gave independence to Ireland, I think it neceſſary to obſerve, that it was accompanied by a reſolution which contained a ſalutary proviſion. The reſolution ſtated, that it was the opinion of the Houſe that the connexion between both kingdoms ſhould be conſolidated by future meaſures or regulations founded upon the baſis of mutual conſent.—[Mr. Pitt read the Reſolution from the Journals of the Houſe.]—That Reſolution was alſo carried in an Addreſs to the Throne. Therefore, Sir, I have the authority of that Reſolution to prove that no final adjuſtment was then made, and nothing has been ſince attempted to provide for that defective ſettlement but the partial and inadequate meaſure of the Iriſh Propoſitions, which were defeated by the perſons who framed the reſolution, and who found no ſubſtitute in their room. The *onus* of ſhewing that it was not a final adjuſtment, lies with thoſe who framed that reſolution; I mean with the Hon. Gentleman and his friends. The *onus* lay with the Hon. Gentleman to ſtate what means and what reſources he had in his mind to anſwer the pledge given to the country. But, Sir, is there no probable caſe in which the Legiſlatures of both kingdoms may differ? Has the Hon. Gentleman forgotten that one caſe did ariſe, and that within the ſhort ſpace of 16 years? With that experience before my eyes which we foreſaw, no arguments can at preſent be neceſſary to ſhew that the poſſible recurrence of ſuch a caſe ſhould be precluded. The caſe to which I allude, is one which has been noticed by the Hon. Gentleman, but noticed only to be gloſſed over. I mean the Regency. The difference of principle was evident, for the Iriſh Parliament decided upon one principle and the Britiſh Parliament upon another. They both led to the appointment of the ſame Perſon, but that was accidental, for that Perſon muſt have governed Ireland upon one principle and England upon another. He would have been Regent in one capacity in one country, and in a capacity directly the reverſe in the other. It, therefore, followed that the office might, upon grounds equally juſtifiable, have been veſted in two diſtinct perſons. Will any man, with ſo inſtructive an example before his eyes, talk with ſincerity of a final adjuſtment? Will any man tell us that the ſecurity of the empire is in its preſent view founded on a permanent baſis? In the only war which has taken place ſince the eſtabliſhment of Iriſh independence, the queſtion of mutual intereſt has been ſo exactly the ſame, that I cannot quote any difference of opinion on that head. Fortunately, the only great inſtance in which two countries could act in oppoſition had not then occurred, and the local intereſt of Ireland has in the preſent war been ſo intimately connected with this kingdom, and her exiſtence and welfare has ſo much depended upon us, that there is no opportunity of citing a caſe of diſpute between both nations on the great queſtions of peace and war. But will the Hon. Gentleman pretend to maintain, that when the habit of diſcuſſing the foreign relations of the Empire ſhall take place, the Parliament

of

of Ireland may not, as it might naturally think itſelf entitled to do, proceed to enquire into treaties and alliances?—On a ſuppoſed difference of local intereſt, will the Hon, Gentleman tell me it is impoſſible that the Parliament of Ireland ſhould take one ſtep in giving advice to the Sovereign and the Parliament of Great Britain another? If in the preſent conteſt, the Oppoſition were to have as much influence in Ireland as they formerly poſſeſſed, a vote for peace might be paſſed, and the efforts of Great Britain paralized. Will the Hon. Gentleman tell me, that the Parliament of Ireland might not in ſuch a caſe neutralize its ports, prevent the raiſing of recruits for the army and navy, and ſtrike a fatal blow at the power, and endanger the exiſtence of the empire. Let any man maturely reflect on the dangers that may poſſibly reſult from the preſent ſituation of both countries, and he will tremble at the perils to which they are expoſed. Even with regard to the conteſt in which we are now ſtruggling for the deareſt and moſt valuable conſiderations, is there not ground for juſt alarm? It is true, that the influence of the Oppoſition party in Ireland, has been leſs prominent than ever. The influence of the great Patriot is extinct in Ireland, nearly in the ſame way that the reputation of the other great patriots here in England has expired. But if we wiſh to render the connexion perpetual, and to make the ties indiſſoluble, ſhall we do our duty to either country if we neglect to bring forward this propoſition? I have, Sir, been arguing to provide for the proſperity and ſafety of Ireland, and to remedy the miſerable imperfections of the arrangement made in 1782. But how does it ſtand at preſent? The ſituation of the country is indeed deplorable. Rent by party diſtraction, torn by the diviſions of ſects, ſubject to the revival of inflamed hoſtility, a prey to the hereditary animoſity of the old Iriſh and the Engliſh ſettlers, the ſcene of conſtant prejudices proceeding from ſuperſtition and ignorance. Add, Sir, to this true colouring, the infuſion of the laſt deadly poiſon, Jacobiniſm, and they will altogether produce a picture of the moſt horrible kind. There we may clearly diſtinguiſh a miſerable ſtate of ceaſeleſs contention, of perpetual diſtraction, of the moſt rooted animoſity, which, however great the exertions of the Legiſlature of Ireland may be, and I heartily give them all the praiſe which they have received from the tardy panegyric of the Hon. Gentleman, they can never ſucceed in removing. Theſe conſiderations, without entering into any minute details, which, as I have before obſerved, are in this ſtate of the buſineſs unneceſſary, are, I truſt, ſufficient to induce the Houſe to agree to the inveſtigation of means that may be deemed adequate to eſtabliſh the internal tranquillity of that country, add to the ſtore of our common reſources, and conſolidate and ſtrengthen the general intereſt of the Empire. If any inſtitution be inadequate to provide an effectual remedy for theſe evils, it is, Sir, I do not heſitate to ſay, the Iriſh Legiſlature; not from any defect of intention, not from any want of talent, but from its own nature; and it is and muſt be incapable of reſtoring the internal happineſs of the country, and fixing the proſperity of the people on a firm and permanent baſis, as long as the preſent ſtate of that kingdom, with reſpect to its relation to Great Britain, continues.

That Legiſlature, formed as it is, muſt continue ever radically defective. I have, Sir, ſpoken an honeſt and a fair opinion. I have not been deterred from it by any apprehenſion that it may not prove acceptable to any ſet of men on this or on the other ſide of the water; but there is no circumſtance of probable difficulty, no idea of the loſs of popularity, no perſonal conſideration, however weighty, can prevent me from uſing every exertion and every effort in my power to accompliſh a meaſure which, in my firm conviction, directly tends to promote the happineſs of the people of Ireland; to eſtabliſh the mutual relations of both countries on the moſt ſolid and advantageous baſis, and to conſolidate in the moſt permanent manner the genuine intereſts of the Britiſh Empire."

THURSDAY, January 31, 1799.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. PITT, roſe, and ſpoke to the following effect: "Sir, when I propoſed to the Houſe to fix this day for the conſideration of a ſubject ſo highly important in its nature, and ſo intimately connected with the ſafety of the Britiſh Empire, as that which was recommended in His Majeſty's moſt gracious Meſſage, I indulged in the hope that His Majeſty's communication to the parliament of Ireland with reſpect to the ſame object, would have opened a ſpeedy and effectual way to ſecure the happy accompliſhment of a meaſure which was calculated to draw cloſer the ties of mutual intereſt between both countries, to perpetuate a connexion eſſential for their common ſecurity and happineſs, to augment the power and reſources, and conſolidate the ſtrength of the Britiſh Empire, and more immediately to eſtabliſh on a firm and permanent baſis the tranquillity and proſperity of Ireland itſelf. That hope I am ſincerely concerned to obſerve, has been diſappointed by the meaſures which have ſince occurred. I know that the parliament of Ireland, in the diſcuſſion and deciſion which have followed His Majeſty's moſt gracious communication, has exerciſed that competency which I do not mean to queſtion, but admit it fully poſſeſſes, to reject or adopt any meaſure propoſed to them by the Executive Government. One of the Houſes of Parliament in Ireland has however thought proper to adopt the recommendation. Feeling as I do a firm perſuaſion of the great, ſolid, and extenſive benefits that muſt reſult to Ireland from conſenting to carry into effect the object propoſed; feeling as I do the immenſe addition that muſt alſo accrue to the Empire at large, and the conſolidation of ſtrength, intereſt, and affection that muſt be derived to both countries from the execution of it—I cannot avoid ſaying, that I am impreſſed with the deepeſt regret for the diſappointment which has taken place. But, Sir, knowing at the ſame time the undoubted right of Parliament to come to ſuch reſolutions as it may think moſt proper, and to act in every manner moſt conformable to the ſentiments by which it is actuated, I do treat the deciſion of Parliament on that momentous conſideration with the greateſt deference and reſpect. I have not the moſt remote intention of agitating matters, which might poſſibly, in the courſe of their diſcuſſion, give riſe to a ſpirit of animoſity, or lead to hoſtilities between both countries; but while I treat that deciſion with every mark of reſpect

ſpect to which, as the act of an independent Houſe of Commons, it is clearly intitled, I muſt ſay, that I have a duty to perform, which, conſiſtently with my conviction and feelings as a Member of the Britiſh Parliament, I am bound to execute. That duty is to ſtate to the Houſe the outlines of the plan which has been deemed juſt and effectual for ſettling a complete and final adjuſtment between both countries. I am ready to admit that there is no chance of bringing it to a happy termination while it is oppoſed by the ſenſe of the Houſe of Commons of Ireland; and having allowed that, I muſt obſerve, that it is upon that very ground that I feel it the more neceſſary to urge it now, and by ſtating the outlines of the meaſure, to ſhew the vaſt and permanent advantages which have been neglected, in conſequence of the vote which precluded the diſcuſſion of the propoſed arrangement. It is therefore my duty to explain the motives by which the meaſure was dictated and brought forward, and to ſtate openly and fairly the plan to this Houſe, in order that it ſhould remain recorded here, as that on which the Parliament of this country, if it be ſanctioned with our approbation, is willing to cloſe with the Parliament of that kingdom, leaving it to that country to reject or adopt, as it may judge moſt expedient, at any future opportunity. When a great queſtion like the preſent was brought forward in Ireland, unaccompanied as it was by any details, it was not unlikely that it ſhould meet conſiderable oppoſition from national pride; from miſrepreſentation; from miſconſtruction, and a variety of cauſes; yet to whatever motives the ſentiments of diſlike which have been manifeſted againſt it may be attributed, it is, I muſt obſerve, eſſential and neceſſary it ſhould be known on what grounds the Parliament of Great Britain came forward to promote a more intimate and laſting connexion between the two countries. In this point of view, I have no heſitation in ſaying, that I am convinced, under the apparent diſcouragement which prevails, notwithſtanding the prejudices which have been diſplayed, that this meaſure is founded upon ſuch principles of reciprocal benefit and proſperity, and is ſo materially connected with the general intereſts of the Britiſh Empire, from which Ireland cannot be ſeparated for a moment in argument or in fact, that it ſhould be ſtated clearly and diſpaſſionately by us, and be left open to the free, ſober, and unprejudiced diſcuſſion and deciſion of the Iriſh Parliament for rejection or adoption on any future occaſion. It will not, I truſt, be denied, that it is neceſſary time ſhould alſo be given to all thoſe in any manner connected with the reſult of it, to deliberate on the probable effects of the plan, and to form a juſt eſtimate of its conſequences. It is neceſſary that all thoſe who are in any degree implicated in the event, ſhould be at full liberty to weigh the various reaſons which may operate on their minds, either in favour or againſt the meaſure, with reſpect to the preſent and future ſtate of trade, commerce, and manufactures, and their extenſive and complicated relations; with reſpect to the preſent diſtracted ſtate of Ireland, and the ſatisfactory proſpect of allaying and ſuppreſſing for ever all party animoſity and religious prejudice; and with reſpect to the preſent want of improvement in the manners of the people, and

the probable ſpeedy progreſs of civilization and internal happineſs. Theſe weighty topics cannot be candidly and impartially determined without minute inveſtigation, unremitting attention, and cool, mature, and diſpaſſionate diſcuſſion. I am the more encouraged in the hope that a plan pregnant with ſuch bleſſings, will prove ultimately ſucceſsful, when I obſerve that the majority which rejected all diſcuſſion, without wiſhing to hear the grounds on which the recommendation was ſupported, conſiſted of barely more than one half of the Members preſent. When I obſerve in the other Houſe of Parliament, containing ſo very large and valuable a proportion of the property of the kingdom, a decided opinion expreſſed in favour of the meaſure; when I obſerve that on the very outſet of the buſineſs, when popular prejudice and clamour were induſtriouſly excited againſt it, that much of the trading part of the kingdom, and a conſiderable ſhare of commercial intereſt came forward with the acknowledged declaration of its utility: Theſe, Sir, are ſufficient grounds to juſtify me in entertaining every rational expectation of ſucceſs. But notwithſtanding all theſe great and ſatisfactory reaſons that offer themſelves to my mind for expecting a favourable concluſion, I cannot ſay that I look to an adjuſtment crowned with the unanimous concurrence, though, I truſt, ratified with the full and deliberate conſent of the Parliament of both kingdoms. It is, Sir, with a view of theſe objects that I think it my duty to bring forward this day a plan for carrying into effect the object of his Majeſty's gracious communication; not for the purpoſe of being immediately acted upon, but that it may be known, and that the juſt grounds of ſucceſs may be aſcertained. With this intention it is my duty to open to the Houſe the outlines of the plan, obſerving that I do not mean to make them the ſubject of debate at preſent. Acting upon this plain, and I truſt conſiſtent principle, it appears to me that the faireſt way of proceeding will be to ſtate to the Houſe a ſtring of Reſolutions which have been prepared for that end. When the conſideration of them comes on, that cannot be done while you, Sir, remain in the Chair, and it will be neceſſary for me to move the Houſe to reſolve itſelf into a Committee of the whole Houſe. If it ſhall be agreed on by the Committee that the Reſolutions are fit to form the baſis of the outlines, my opinion will be that Parliament ſhould adopt them, vote an Addreſs on the ſubject of them, and lay them at the foot of the Throne to be communicated to Ireland, when an opportunity favourable to the diſpaſſionate inveſtigation of them ſhall occur. I have now, Sir, explained to the Houſe the motives which have induced me to ſubmit the plan to Parliament, and I will now endeavour to explain the general grounds of the meaſure, and the general arguments by which it is ſupported, and to give at the ſame time as ſhort a view as I can of the whole. As to the principle on which all the out-lines are founded, I am happy to find that no difference of opinion exiſts on that head. I am happy to find from what has happened in this Houſe in the late Debate, when the ſubject was firſt introduced and agitated, that the general principle of the neceſſity of perpetuating the connexion between both countries was

fully

fully recognized That principle, which once admitted, and which indeed cannot be denied, was forcibly ſtated by an Hon. Gentleman oppoſite to me, who deprecated all diſcuſſion on that night. But the neceſſity of the connexion thus acknowledged, leads neceſſarily to the moſt important conſiderations. We are bound to conſider that connexion with due regard to the intereſts of Ireland—we are to conſider it with regard to its trade, manufactures, and commerce —we are to conſider it with regard to the permanent eſtabliſhment of its domeſtic peace and happineſs; with regard to its perfect ſecurity from the avowed deſigns of the enemy to effect its ſeparation from this country; with regard to its ſtrengthening the power and reſources of the Empire at large, and with regard to admitting it to the full and unqualified enjoyment of all the bleſſings by the poſſeſſion of which Great Britain is ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed from all other nations. Admitting this principle, on which the Legiſlatures of Great Britain and Ireland muſt act, let me now aſk, what is the preſent ſituation of that connexion, the neceſſity of preſerving and perpetuating which is ſo amply allowed, even by thoſe who declare themſelves unfriendly to the meaſure now under conſideration? That connexion, ſo neceſſary to the proſperity, and even to the exiſtence of Ireland, and ſo advantageous to the common intereſts of the Empire, has been attacked both by foreign and domeſtic enemies. Our foreign enemies have failed in every attempt, though the proſpect of diſſolving that connexion forms perhaps the only remaining hope of the foe. But he has been hitherto baffled in every endeavour to accompliſh an object ſo deſirable to his intereſts; he has been ſucceſſively defeated with diſgrace, and all his attempts have been triumphantly turned into additional means of our own ſecurity. Perhaps the means uſed by the enemy to accompliſh the ſeparation of both countries, may be the means of knitting cloſer the union that exiſts between us, and of ſtrengthening the barrier which in the preſent criſis we oppoſe to the perfidious principles and boundleſs ambition of France. That connexion has not only been attacked in an alarming manner by a foreign enemy, but it has been attacked in a ſtill more dangerous way by domeſtic treaſon, excited by France; and in addition to the diſtracted ſtate of Ireland, all the horrors of Jacobiniſm have been engrafted on the complicated miſeries of the old ſyſtem. Let us then ſee if any new order of things congenial to the exigencies of the moment, ſuitable and calculated to ward off impending danger, and adapted, as far as human wiſdom can make it, to remedy the growing evils can be deviſed to ſecure the connexion which is confeſſed in the fulleſt ſenſe to be abſolutely neceſſary. We know that the connexion, as it is at preſent formed, is ſuch, that the greatneſs of the danger likely to reſult from it is admitted by all. We ought to be wiſe in time; we ought to provide againſt the inſidious and tyrannical encroachments of an enemy, who, though not truly wiſe, enjoys a pre-eminence of wiſdom in knowing how to invent and apply with ſucceſs all the means of miſchief, murder, and deva-ſtation. If there exiſts any doubt of the precarious ſtate of the preſent connexion, this circumſtance is alone ſufficient to juſtify us in viewing it with apprehenſion and fear, and in finding out means

to

to alter, improve, and perpetuate it. But it is ſufficient, without any extraneous reference, to look at that connexion which all men wiſh to preſerve and render permanent; and I do not heſitate to maintain, that it does afford the ſecurity we deſire for either country. I took the liberty of ſtating on a former night, that the ſettlement of 1782, ſo far from deſerving the name of final adjuſtment, was one that left the connexion liable to periſh by every breath of accident, and ſubject to be broken by the ſlighteſt caſualties. It was in truth inadequate, incompetent, and in every reſpect ill calculated to ſecure the end for which it was framed. Let no man think that I conſider the conduct of Great Britain before the ſettlement of 1782 liberal. We certainly had previouſly acted with a narrow ſelfiſh policy towards Ireland. Jealous of their commercial proſperity, looking upon them as the rivals of our proſperity, we only regarded them as the inſtruments of our own aggrandizement. But afterwards, when that ſelfiſh, that illiberal, that defective ſyſtem was altered in 1782, what was ſubſtituted in its room? We demoliſhed one ſyſtem, and we furniſhed nothing in its place. This, Sir, is not preſumption, it is not bold and unſupported aſſertion; it is not forced conjecture. I take it to be ſo from the ſettlement itſelf. I prove it to be ſo from the declared opinion of the Britiſh Parliament. I aſſert it to be ſo from the recorded opinions of the miniſters themſelves who made it. It is proved from the acts of the men who formed it—from their own knowledge who made it, that it was incomplete, partial, and defective. Two independent Legiſlatures, without any common bond of connexion, and which the occurrence of any caſualty might for ever ſeparate, were eſtabliſhed. The ties between both countries, which ought to have been ſtrong and laſting, were ſlight and fleeting, and the very men who brought forward the new arrangement were diſſatisfied with their own work; they ſaw the imperfections of it, and wiſhed to provide for them by a ſubſequent proceeding. Yet nothing ſince had been done to remove the defects under which it laboured, and that boaſted ſettlement remained to the preſent hour in the ſame precarious and nugatory ſtate. But I have great authority for going farther in this mode of argument; and I can ſtate, without expoſing myſelf to the danger of contradiction, that even in the opinion of ſome of thoſe perſons who have recently oppoſed the preſent meaſure in Ireland, the ſettlement of 1782 was not calculated to perpetuate the connexion between both countries, to ſecure the commercial proſperity of Ireland, or to encreaſe the common intereſt and power of the Britiſh Empire. I have, Sir, in favour of this poſition, the authority even of one * for whom I certainly entertain the higheſt reſpect—one, Sir, who in that country fills the important ſituation which you do here. His opinion was, that the connexion of 1782 could not laſt. Sir, I ſtated to you on

* See Mr. Foſter's Speeches in the Houſe of Commons of Ireland, Auguſt 1785, on a Motion "for leave to bring in a Bill for effectuating the Intercourſe and Commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, &c."—at the end of this Publication; taken verbatim from Mr. W. Woodfall's *Impartial Sketch of that Debate.*

a former

a former occaſion the hiſtory of that tranſaction, and it fully appears from your Journals. A Meſſage was ſent from the Throne, ſtating the grievances complained of in an Addreſs from the Lords and Commons of Ireland, and the ſubject matter of the complaints was by His Majeſty's command laid before the Parliament of Great Britain: it was immediately followed by acts of redreſs. The repeal of the Declaratory Law was moved and carried, and ſatisfaction was given to the exiſting diſcontents with reſpect to the independency of the Iriſh Legiſlature: but the Miniſters of that day were clearly of opinion, and Parliament coincided in that ſentiment, by reſolving that a further connexion was neceſſary; and as a ſupplement, it was recorded in the Journals, that ſuch other terms ſhould be ſettled as might be agreed on between the two nations." [Here Mr. *Sheridan* obſerving acroſs the table that Mr. Pitt ought to read the reſolutions to the Houſe, Mr. Pitt continued] "It is certainly my deſire, Sir, that every paper and document ſhould be read before the Houſe proceeds to the diſcuſſion; but I beg not to be interrupted in the courſe of my obſervations. I ſay, Sir, that a further connexion was deemed neceſſary. The Hon. Gentleman may read as much as he pleaſes, but he muſt alſo ſtate to the Houſe the particulars of the ſubject, and the reaſons by which he thinks himſelf enabled to ſupport this explanation of the text. An Addreſs was voted to His Majeſty in conſequence of that proceeding, and a gracious Meſſage from His Majeſty was delivered by an Hon. Gentleman, a Member of this Houſe, who was then one of the principal Secretaries of State, but who is not now in the Houſe. Meaſures were recommended to be taken in order to extend the Settlement, but no ſuch meaſures have ever ſince been adopted. It is therefore undeniable, that ſuch meaſures were recommended for the purpoſe of making that Settlement perfect which was admitted to be altogether imperfect. It conſequently remains to this hour in its original imperfect and incomplete ſtate. We ſay that Great Britain and Ireland ought to be inſeparably united. On that general principle there is no ſhade of difference of opinion; yet the Parliaments were different in both kingdoms, and the Crown which governed both had only the power of rejecting or accepting the Acts of the Iriſh Parliament under the Great Seal of that kingdom. If to guard againſt the fatal effects of party and local prejudice,—if to provide an effectual remedy for the alarming diſcontents excited by hereditary feuds—if to extinguiſh for ever the inveterate animoſity of jarring ſects, and conſtant diſſenſions, be the great end to which we ſhould direct our attention, and for the attainment of which we ſhould exert every effort, it would be ſufficient barely to ſtate the meaſure, in order to evince its ſalutary operation. But, Sir, I have an opinion in additional ſupport of my ſentiments which muſt go, from the authority of the perſon who delivered it, a conſiderable way in my favour. It was delivered on the commercial propoſitions, which were not accepted, and conſequently can be no bar to any further arrangements, and it muſt have great weight with the Houſe. I am not, Sir, about to diſcuſs the nature of the commercial propoſitions in 1785, though they went, in the opinion of many, to

palliate

palliate the evil. But thoſe who maintained the ſettlement of 1782 with undiminiſhed perſeverance,—I ſpeak, I am ſure upon better record than that of Parliamentary proceedings,—thoſe who maintained the ſettlement of 1782 were particularly zealous and indefatigable in their ſupport of the commercial propoſitions of 1785, and their opinion on that point was contained in a ſtatement drawn up by thoſe who were the parties in the previous arrangemet. I find, then, Sir, that the Gentleman whoſe authority I mean to cite, and who was at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Iriſh Houſe of Commons (Mr. Foſter), did not ſcruple to expreſs his ſentiments in the following terms, which are contained in the ſtatement to which I allude—" If this infatuated country gives up the preſent offer, ſhe will, I fear, look for it again in vain."—Now, Sir, I hope that will not be the caſe, and that the offer will be given again, even upon more advantageous conditions. But this Gentleman goes on and obſerves—" Things cannot remain as they are." *(A general cry of Hear! Hear!)* Yet, Sir, all this language, all theſe ſtrong and deciſive declarations are forgotten, and the boaſted final adjuſtment of 1782 is pleaded as an unanſwerable argument againſt all further ſettlement. But the Hon. Gentleman proceeding ſtill more forcibly to impreſs his ſentiments, remarks—" Commercial jealouſies muſt ariſe. The connexion cannot laſt.—I beg leave to obſerve, that I do not quote this againſt the opinion of the Hon. Gentleman, but with a view of ſhewing, that the connexion of 1782, on which ſo much reliance is placed by the enemies of the preſent meaſure, was in reality never felt to be final and ſufficient for its purpoſe. Permit me, Sir, to aſk, how will Gentlemen oppoſite to me, get rid of this weighty authority which goes ſo ſtrongly againſt them and which they now begin to reſpect?—Will they undertake to prove, in oppoſition to this opinion of the Gentleman to whom I allude, that the preſent connexion does not carry in it the ſeeds of future ſeparation, that it is not likely to produce a conſtant round and ſucceſſion of commercial jealouſies ariſing from the jarring acts of two diſtinct and ſeparate Legiſlatures? If they cannot prove this, and I believe they will hardly attempt ſo very arduous a taſk,—the queſtion that naturally preſents itſelf is, how can theſe evils, and the dangers which threaten both nations be prevented? I anſwer, that they can only be averted by one compact, or by blending both Parliaments together in an incorporate Union. What then is the ſtate of opinion on this important point? Why, in ſpite of the opinion of the Gentleman to whom I have referred—in ſpite of the advantages that muſt be derived to Ireland in particular from this meaſure, in ſpite of the conſolidation of the ſtrength and reſources of the Empire, it ſo happens that opinions borrowed from this ſide of the water converted the Iriſh Parliament, and convinced them that it was improper to admit any arrangement as inconſiſtent with the independence of the Legiſlature. The conſequence is plain and undeniable. The ſeeds of ſeparation muſt be ſuffered to remain, and the exiſting connexion between us may be completely annihilated by mere accident. The only mode of providing an efficient remedy is by compact or by union. But

if

if to all the weight of theſe authorities—if to the opinion of Gentlemen who have maturely conſidered paſt tranſactions and the relative ſituation of both kingdoms—if the experience of what has ſince happened—if facts melancholy and deplorable, which are recent in the mind of every man, fail in ſhewing the neceſſity of the meaſure, there is however one ſolitary event, the only great occaſion which has occurred ſince the final adjuſtment, which ſhews beyond the poſſibility of doubt the practical effects of that arrangement; and after this proof, which had been previouſly ſeen in argument, will any one oppoſe the neceſſity of ſome further proceedings to improve and perpetuate the connexion? The circumſtance was indeed of a moſt intereſting kind, and was pregnant with the moſt imminent perils; and if we had not been relieved by a happy event from the perplexities and embarraſſments into which it muſt have involved us—an event to which we muſt look with complete ſatisfaction, exultation, and gratitude, we ſhould have been eſſentially ſeparated from Ireland. Every Gentleman muſt know to what I allude. In the queſtion of the Regency, the deciſion of the Iriſh Parliament was in direct oppoſition to that of the Parliament of Great Britain. It was founded upon principles directly oppoſite to thoſe by which the Britiſh Parliament was influenced, and it was but mere accident that thoſe principles led to the nomination of the ſame perſon as Regent, but with different reſtrictions and oppoſite offices. They certainly might with equal conſiſtency and juſtice have led to the appointment of different perſons; and can any man, after that inſtructive example, heſitate to ſay, that the ſecurity for the ſtability of the connexion between the two countries is inſufficient, partial, and defective? In one kingdom the office of Regent was to be held by one tenure, and in the other by an oppoſite one, and thus the link of connexion was completely deſtroyed. Such an act would have been politically and practically the cauſe of diſcord and ſeparation, and muſt have impaired the ſecurity of the Empire. If then a queſtion has ariſen of ſo very dangerous a tendency in the ſhort ſpace of 16 years, and that we have found the actual ſyſtem eſtabliſhed between us to have failed in promoting that connexion, in the neceſſity of which there is no diverſity of opinion, I aſk, are or are we not authorized, are we not rather compelled by the irreſiſtible dictates of our duty and our own conviction, to provide againſt any future contingency? But entering ſomewhat deeper into this moſt ſerious conſideration, and looking at the diſtinct powers of conſidering of peace or war, of diſcuſſing foreign treaties and alliances on any ſuppoſed or real grounds of national advantage, which in their unqualified extent muſt be allowed to belong to the Parliament of Ireland, will any Gentleman tell me that the deciſion of the Iriſh Parliament might not be one way, and that of the Parliament of Great Britain another? Will any Gentleman undertake to aſſure us that the Parliament of Ireland would not give different advice to their Sovereign from the Parliament of Great Britain. Will it be advanced that queſtions of ſuch moment ſhould not occur on which the independence and even the exiſtence of either kingdom might be at ſtake? I believe,

Sir, no man will be found bold enough to advance ſuch aſſertions. Are we contented with ſaying that the ſuppreſſion of party diſtinctions is ſufficient? Are we ſatisfied with providing a partial cure for the evils and grievances which are ſo juſtly complained of? No, Sir! I wiſh to ſpeak out largely for all that are involved in the reſult of this great queſtion. I ſincerely wiſh I could diſcuſs with every man in Ireland his reſpective intereſt, with a juſt reference to the proſperity of all. Suppoſe the Parliament of Ireland ſhould think the preſent war unjuſt? do Gentlemen mean to ſay that ſuch a difference of opinion could not exiſt between us? I ſhould be glad to have an anſwer to theſe conſiderations which have been already admitted as juſt by every man, and even by the Hon. Gentleman whom I have only heard on the ſubject as a warm friend to perpetual connexion. Admitting then this principle, the queſtion is, have we or have we not ſufficient grounds to proceed in ſtrengthening the ties of union between both countries? We are now engaged in a conteſt the moſt awful and important that has ever called for the combined exertion of wiſdom, magnanimity, and perſeverance. If then we have a weak point expoſed to the open attack and inſidious arts of the enemy, and which has been actually attacked in both theſe ways by the enemy, I ſhould ſay, let that point be fortified. I ſhould ſay ſo more decidedly from the nature of the ſtruggle in which we have ſo glorioufly oppoſed the horrors of revolution with increaſing ſpirit and proportionate perſeverance. I ſhould ſay ſo becauſe we are involved in a conteſt of order and regular Government againſt confuſion and anarchy, of morality againſt boundleſs and ſavage licentiouſneſs, of religion againſt impiety, of virtue and ſocial happineſs againſt vice of the moſt deteſtable kind, and the violation of every ſocial duty, of property againſt plunder and depredation. Theſe expreſſions have been treated as idle declamations, but they are now practiſed and atteſted by the bleeding wounds of devaſtated Europe; yet realized as the language has been, it is too feeble to paint in their genuine colouring all the horrors and all the miſeries of revolutionary ſucceſs. Is there then, in the actual criſis of public affairs, any man that will not feel that to bind Great Britain and Ireland together in a cloſer union againſt the fatal inroads of France, is a benefit ſo important and ineſtimable, not only to ourſelves but to the whole world, that even commercial advantages, local conſiderations, political importance, muſt all ſink and appear weak in compariſon of that great and indiſpenſible object. But even theſe conſiderations will ſuffer no abatement from the preſent meaſure, for they will be greatly increaſed, while we ſhall unite to form an inſurmountable barrier againſt the inordinate and ſanguinary power of the enemy. The accompliſhment is the more eaſily to be attained, as they are neceſſary in ſecuring us mutually from danger and in defeating the ambitious and turbulent hopes of France. There has not been, there is not a ſingle Stateſman, there is no man, however little acquainted with the real intereſts of Europe, who will not tell you that the union of Great Britain and Ireland is a moſt invaluable acceſſion of the whole, as a conſolidation of the power and reſources of the Britiſh Empire; and can any man deny

that

that the component parts of it are more deeply intereſted in that grand point, without which they muſt all fall to pieces, than in any benefits, however great, that may reſult from local advantages? All authors who have reaſoned with any degree of ſound political argument, have been uniformly of that opinion. And, Sir, if any thing in particular could infuſe terror into the heart of the enemy, it would be, that the ſyſtem which between this country and Ireland was before nominal and precarious, ſhould become real and permanent. But in what degree does it tend to increaſe the ſecurity and happineſs of Ireland? In the exact proportion which all the parts muſt bear to the whole, when all are equally conſolidated in giving power to the empire. A proportion too ſtrong, too evident, and too cogent to require the ſupport of argument. That which has hitherto enabled us to make a formidable and triumphant ſtand againſt the eccentric, extravagant and extraordinary power of France —that which gradually leads to open to each other our reſpective markets—that which by reciprocal intercourſe improves the ſtate of manners—that which by introducing the common uſe of capital to the encouragement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures—that which extinguiſhes the illiberal and deſtructive ſpirit of national prejudices and party feuds, muſt have an evident and natural tendency to increaſe the proſperity and augment the power of both countries. With reſpect to the permanent ſecurity of Ireland, there can, I believe, ariſe no doubt on that topic. We have ſeen Ireland diſtracted and torn by domeſtic treachery, and expoſed to the danger of foreign invaſion. We have ſeen the military force of Great Britain, nor required by the Conſtitution, interfere with ardour, and acquire true glory in reſtoring the tranquillity of that country. We have ſeen and admired the gallantry, courage, and perſeverance of Volunteers and Yeomanry, who, by their patriotic exertions, have deſerved every thing that has been ſaid in praiſe of their heroic ardour, and of whom it might be juſtly ſaid, that they deſerve to be in reality the brethren of Britons. But the very extent of the difficulties in which we have been engaged, has carried along with it their cure. It never has happened that Great Britain has ſo truly flouriſhed as when attacked in Ireland, and when that country was threatened with the friendſhip and bleſſings of French fraternity. If the danger were leſs marked, and the criſis leſs deciſive, would the ſame means have been in our power? It is then to the ſpirited perſeverence of Ireland, ſeconded by the gallant exertions of this country, that we are indebted for our common preſervation and preſent ſafety; and is not this a weighty motive in us both to improve and perpetuate the eſtabliſhed connexion between us? What, Sir, is the effectual cure for ſuch dangers hereafter, but to blend the people of that kingdom with ourſelves, to identify them with ourſelves, to make them ſhare all the advantages which we enjoy in peace and in war, to inſpire a generous emulation into the whole, and to enable them to participate in all the reſources and in all the bleſſings of this nation, permanent as we are in every acquirement that can diſtinguiſh and exalt a country? I do not heſitate to ſay, that the man who does not at once perceive the beneficial effects of this great plan, muſt be blind to every other conſideration of the moſt obvi-

ous

ble importance and neceſſity. If therefore it comes to us ſo ſtrongly recommended, what are we to look to next? We muſt look to the internal ſtate of Ireland. I know that any attempt on our part to arrogate the right of judging of the claims of contending ſects, what the Proteſtants may think proper to grant, or what the Catholics may think juſt to demand, is improper. I diſclaim all right to any interference with reſpect to the internal regulations and arrangements of an independent country. Yet we cannot be altogether blind to what paſſes there, more immediately when we conſider it as an aſſailable point. Whoever upon that ground looks upon all the miſeries which have happened there—whoever reflects on all thoſe lamentable but neceſſary ſeverities which have been exerciſed, and have been in fact aggravations of the guilt of the offenders—whoever was convinced of the calamitous ſtate of the people in general; of the want of improvement and refinement in manners; of the unequal diſtribution of property; of the diſtraction of religious ſects; of the rooted animoſity that has deſcended from generation to generation, and ſtill ſubſiſts between the native Iriſh and Britiſh ſettlers; of the want of capital, ſo neceſſary to promote the extenſion of commerce, muſt alſo be convinced of the neceſſity of the preſent plan. But how much more forcibly muſt that conviction be, when to all theſe irreſiſtible motives are added the poiſonous principles of Jacobiniſm, the deadly ſpirit of innovation and anarchy, undermining the ſmall portion of happineſs left, and converting into the inſtruments of deſpotiſm a people deluded with the mockery and cant of French liberty. Such, Sir, is the unhappy ſtate of that country which we have ſo much reaſon to deplore, and ſhall we heſitate to apply as far as we can go, a remedy we have the more ſubſtantial reaſons to deem deciſive? I do not believe the Hon. Gentleman is likely to enter into a vindication of a ſituation of ſuch complicated horror and diſtreſs. I know no remedy for theſe evils but an Imperial legiſlation, to allay diſtraction, to heal the wounds of inteſtine faction, to reſtore general peace and domeſtic comfort. And looking at Ireland ſeparately, we cannot ſpeak of it but as a part of the whole Empire. We cannot, conſidering its intimate relation to ourſelves, ſpeak of it but as true Iriſhmen: nor can the people of that country ſpeak of us on the ſame principle but as true Engliſhmen. But, Sir, if it were even poſſible to ſeparate the conſideration, which I completely deny—I ſay, even in that caſe, that it would be for the ſake of Ireland itſelf to apply that remedy in conjunction with Great Britain, which alone can reſtore it to the enjoyment of national happineſs and domeſtic comfort. If the want of improvement, and of all thoſe bleſſings which have been enumerated, is granted, where is the remedy to be found but in an Union? What is the ſituation of the Proteſtants and Catholics now? The Proteſtants may ſay, that any conceſſion to the Catholics will threaten the Proteſtant aſcendancy with ruin: the Catholics, on the other hand, are ſo ſuperior in number, that a ſtate of fear prevails on one ſide, and a ſtate of diſquiet and diſcontent on the other. Such is the ſituation as to render it a delicate and dangerous topic to diſcuſs. The Religion

of the State is on one hand, that of the bulk of the people on the other, and the property of the country in the hands of the ſmaller number. It muſt unqueſtionably be a very excellent and ſtrong ſyſtem that can provide for all the defects of ſuch a ſtate. Diſtracted as it is with the agitation and inflammation of religious opinion, it may probably be for ſome years the ſubject of diſcord. I believe no man will ſay that a full conceſſion to the Roman Catholics of their claims can take place in the actual ſituation of the kingdom. I beg leave to ſay, Sir, that I am now deprecating any diſcuſſion upon that point, but I have no difficulty in ſaying, that two propoſitions with reſpect to that ſubject are, in my opinion, indiſputable. And I do not heſitate to aſſert, that if ever the day ſhould come in which it would be thought juſt and expedient to admit them to the full participation of all the privileges enjoyed by their fellow ſubjects; ſuch a meaſure would, in the United Parliament, be free from every prejudice and party motive which might be ſuppoſed muſt prevail in the Parliament of Ireland. An impartial Legiſlation, far enough removed from the ſcene of contention to act as the common parent of all, and influenced only by the dictates of temper, candour, moderation, and a ſtrict attention to the reſpective claims of the different parties, and to the common intereſts of the whole empire, would be better adapted to decide than any other Aſſembly. If the Legiſlature were not local, but impartial, the Catholics and Proteſtants would conſequently be in the judgment of men diveſted of every prejudice, and intent only upon promoting and eſtabliſhing on a ſatisfactory and permanent baſis the rights of the various claimants But, Sir, whenever that time ſhall ariſe, the queſtion of conceſſion will be perfectly free from every local conſideration, and the Catholics will be put under the impartial protection of an unprejudiced Legiſlature. It may then become a queſtion, whether the payment of tythes, and the payment of their own Miniſters, may not be altered. I merely ſtate theſe matters as ſubjects of fair and impartial conſideration. I ſhall now, Sir, take a more particular view of the benefits which will reſult to Ireland from an incorporative Union with Great Britain. The firſt great and ſolid gain which will ariſe to the ſiſter kingdom, will be the ſecure and permanent preſervation, by an unalterable compact, of all thoſe commercial advantages which Ireland now holds at the diſcretion of Great Britain, and by a tenure which muſt always be conſidered contingent and precarious: and here, Sir, it will be impoſſible for me to follow a better guide than that Hon. Gentleman, whom I have had ſo frequent occaſion to quote, and who ſo ſtrenuouſly urged the commercial propoſitions of 1789 in the Iriſh Parliament. [Here Mr. Pitt read a paſſage from Mr. Foſter's ſpeech upon the mutual exports of the two countries, ſtating thoſe of Ireland from Great Britain in the year 1785 at 1 million, and thoſe of this country from Ireland at 2 millions and a half, and repreſenting the certain continuance of that and all the commercial advantages Ireland enjoyed as entirely dependent upon the adoption of ſome ſuch propoſitions as were then made.] Such, Sir, were the ſentiments, at that period, of this Hon. Gentleman, who has ſince repreſented a final adjuſtment

of

of a more liberal and extenſively beneficial nature than that which he then ſo vehemently preſſed upon his countrymen, as tending to aboliſh for ever all the advantages which they now poſſeſs. So far, indeed, was he then from entertaining any of thoſe apprehenſions which have induced him to reject the preſent propoſitions, that we find him telling his co-legiſlatures, that the ſecure enjoyment of their own fortunes depended on their embracing the opportunity which was then offered to them, of participating in the commerce and proſperity of Great Britain upon a firm and permanent baſis. I do not mean, Sir, to reſt the merits of the preſent meaſure upon arguments uſed at the diſtance of ſeveral years, becauſe I know that it may be ſaid, the circumſtances which warranted theſe may have ſince totally changed; though I cannot ſee what change of circumſtances ſhould juſtify ſo diametrical an oppoſition of opinion, as that of the Hon. Gentleman I allude to. An alteration of circumſtances has certainly taken place, but it is ſuch, Sir, as gives ſtill greater weight to all the arguments which he uſed, ſo far as the commercial intereſts of Ireland were concerned. This will be immediately obvious from a ſhort ſtatement of her commerce as it now ſtands with this country; and here, Sir, I ſhall again refer to the words of the ſame perſon for the ſtate of the argument as it relates to the articles of which the exports and imports are compoſed, and which I the more willingly refer to on account of their peculiar conciſeneſs and force. I have already ſaid that he ſtates the total amount of imports from Great Britain in 1785 at 2,500,000l. and that of the exports to this country at one million. In this comparative eſtimate, he juſtly obſerves, that almoſt every article of Iriſh produce is imported into this country duty free, while there is ſcarcely one article of Britiſh produce or manufacture, upon which a duty is not levied on its importation into Ireland, though nearly one half of the whole of our exports to that kingdom conſiſts of articles of indiſpenſible neceſſity—of ſalt, for carrying on their fiſheries; of hops, which the Iriſh cannot grow; and coals, which they have not yet been able to raiſe in ſufficient quantity for general ſupply. But, ſir, if the honourable gentleman whom I have mentioned, then ſaw how much the commerce of Ireland depended upon the free will and generoſity of this country, and thence recommended with an earneſtneſs proportionate to his conviction of this truth, that the Iriſh Legiſlature ſhould cloſe with the terms then held out to them, how much more zealouſly ſhould he inculcate the ſame ſentiments, when the preſent ſtate of the commerce between the two countries is fairly balanced. As far as reſpects the interchange of manufactures, this country does not at this moment export to Ireland much more than one million ſterling yearly, whilſt the articles which ſhe imports from it, amount to between four and five millions, almoſt all of which, as I have already obſerved, are duty free; and upon every one of them have we given her a preference over every other nation, and in many inſtances over our own manufactures. Four fifths of her whole commerce is conſumed by ourſelves; and yet, ſir, ſuch is the country which has been taught to depend for the continuation and extenſion of commercial bleſſings excluſively upon its own Legiſlature, while their exiſtence for

a moment

a moment is in almoſt every branch dependent upon the generous diſcretion of that of Great Britain. We have not only exempted its linens from any duty on importation, but have ſecured them a double market by granting a bounty on their re-exportation, while we have the competition ariſing from the cheapneſs of the linen manufactures of the Continent by ſubjecting their importation to a duty of 30 per cent. It is to theſe ſacrifices, ſir, upon the part of the Britiſh Legiſlature, that the people of Ireland are indebted for a branch of their exportation, which amounts to three millions a year. I do not mean, ſir, to arraign the propriety and wiſdom of theſe ſacrifices; but at a time when they are ſuppoſed to flow not from the affectionate conceſſions of the people of this country, but from a ſource entirely independent of their influence, I think it is no more than juſt to ſhew that we have made ſuch ſacrifices. The loſs which the Britiſh revenue annually ſuſtains by foregoing the duties upon Iriſh linens, which are levied upon thoſe of other nations, cannot be eſtimated at leſs than 700,000l. and if the cheap rate at which foreign linens could be brought into our market, were it not for the heavy duty to which it is ſubject, be taken into account, it will be found that the real annual ſacrifice which we make in favour of this branch of Iriſh manufacture, is very moderately ſtated at one million. Yet this is one of thoſe advantages, ſir, of which the complete confirmation is by one ſet of men looked upon as pregnant with the moſt deſtructive conſequences. But, Sir, I am happy to find myſelf again ſupported by the ſentiments which one of thoſe perſons, to whom I have repeatedly alluded, formerly delivered upon this ſubject, in maintaining that a free communication between the two countries muſt ultimately be productive of incalculable benefits to both, and that a perfect freedom from taxes ſhould be granted to the manufacturers of each, by which every branch of trade would find its true level, and capital be more productively employed to the ſeparate advantage of each, and to the encreaſing the power and riches of the whole. I have alſo the ſatisfaction to find that the objections which are now ſo warmly urged, in reference to the ſuppoſed injury to the commerce of Ireland, were refuted in 1784, by the ſame perſon, and with his uſual force of argument. He obſerved, that Ireland having as good a climate, and being in every reſpect as favourably ſituated for commerce as England, while her taxes were much lighter, when, by the extinction of the rivalſhip now ſubſiſting between them, trade ſhould be permitted to take its natural courſe, it muſt rapidly riſe in opulence and grandeur. It appears, therefore, Sir, to have been the opinion of an able Stateſman, intimately acquainted with every branch of the commercial intereſt of his native country, that the ſyſtem which I conceive to be moſt neceſſary for ſettling the connexion of Great Britain and Ireland upon a baſis of unalterable ſecurity, muſt be eminently advantageous to the latter. I do not conceive, Sir, that by agreeing in this obſervation, I ſhall excite any alarm in the minds of the people of this country. I am convinced that they feel every diſpoſition to admit their brethren of Ireland to a ſhare in all the proud diſtinctions which they enjoy above every other nation, and that they would have no reluctance to communicate a portion of their wealth,

if

if they could be ſure that what they poured into the lap of Ireland would redound to the general happineſs and ſtrength of the Britiſh Empire, inſtead of being transferred into the ſcale of their enemy. It is from my perfect conviction that ſuch is the temper of all the enlightened portion of my countrymen—from a full belief that if thoſe jealouſies which have ſo long, and ſo unhappily, ſubſiſted between the two countries were finally extinguiſhed, that a participation of every bleſſing which they poſſeſs themſelves, would be cheerfully granted to the ſiſter kingdom—that I for one will never be deterred from making every experiment ſhort of the laſt extremity, to effect a meaſure ſo eſſential to the intereſts of both. That fatal extremity, Sir, I hope never wil arrive; nothing that temper and conciliation can effect will be wanting on the part of this country to prevent it; and if ever it ſhould arrive, it will be entirely owing to the blind counſels of thoſe who may unfortunately have the management of the affairs of the ſiſter kingdom. Of the conciliatory diſpoſition of the Britiſh Parliament, every act that it has paſſed with reſpect to Ireland for a ſeries of years, affords multiplied proof; and the people of Ireland muſt be ſenſible, Sir, that whatever advantages they at this moment poſſeſs, are all originally derived from the Britiſh Legiſlature, and not from the independent Legiſlature of their own country. Thus, Sir, have I endeavoured to give an outline of the important conſiderations which ought to induce the Parliament of both kingdoms to deliberate on the laſt means of effecting the object recommended in His Majeſty's Meſſage, and ſlightly touched in my progreſs upon the various objections to it which may have ariſen from political or commercial jealouſies. I am aware, however, that in addition to thoſe which I have ſtated and refuted, and which ariſe in a great meaſure out of the detail of the contending intereſts which are to be reconciled, objections of greater magnitude have been urged, and unfortunately with too much ſucceſs in the ſiſter country. The firſt, and the moſt important, is that which queſtions the competency of the Legiſlature of Ireland to entertain the diſcuſſion in any ſhape. But upon this I ſhall not enlarge at preſent, as there will be an opportunity of diſtinctly arguing its merits in the courſe of this night, or on any other, if the Hon. Gentleman oppoſite ſhould be diſpoſed to preſs it. I believe, however, that on more deliberate reflection, neither he nor any other perſon within theſe walls will aſſert that the Iriſh Parliament is incompetent to the queſtion; unleſs he means to do one of two things—to diſtinguiſh the authority of the independent and co-equal Legiſlature of Ireland from that of the Parliament of Great Britain, and thus while he inveſts it with a ſacred character, diveſt it at the ſame time of the characteriſtic functions of a Parliament—or, unleſs he be prepared equally to deny the competence of the Parliament of Great Britain. If he maintains the latter alternative, then, Sir, I will contend that he might at the ſame time deny the validity of the Union between England and Scotland—he muſt deny the authority by which we now ſit—he muſt invalidate every law which we or our anceſtors have enacted—and from an unreſtrained application of the ſame principle, every great tranſaction in

our

our hiſtory on which the power of Parliament has been exerciſed, and every maxim upon which he himſelf has acted in his capacity of a legiſlator. I will explain myſelf, Sir, a little farther:—I ſay, that if freſh delegated powers from the conſtituent be neceſſary upon every occaſion, when it is propoſed to alter any part of the conſtitution, then muſt the incorporation of Wales, and the counties Palatine, and the Union with Scotland, have been groſs violations of the conſtitution, and totally deſtitute of legal validity. I muſt apply the ſame principle in a more ſpecial manner to every law which regulates the various qualifications of our electors—to that, for inſtance, which requires that an elector for a county ſhall be poſſeſſed of a freehold of 40s. a year; and in the ſame manner with reſpect to all the charters on which are founded the ſeveral modifications of the elective franchiſe throughout the whole country. If he look to Ireland he will find a ſtill ſtronger inſtance to illuſtrate the abſurdity of ſuch a poſition. Is there any one, Sir, who doubts the competence of a Proteſtant Parliament choſen by Proteſtant electors,-who poſſeſs almoſt the whole property of the kingdom, to emancipate, and aſſimilate to themſelves the great body of the Catholics? And ſhall it be ſaid to be a greater ſtretch of power to aſſociate itſelf with another kingdom poſſeſſing the ſame laws and the ſame religion? Or referring to a ſubject which has of late years been much agitated within this Houſe, I mean that of Reform, I will aſk, whether at the time of their diſcuſſing that queſtion, any of the Gentlemen oppoſite to me entertained any doubt that they had not legal power to diſfranchiſe thoſe who had ſent them into this Houſe, and to enfranchiſe thoſe who had not ſent them. I will deny, Sir, that ſovereignty can exiſt in any country ſeparate from its Legiſlature, or that notwithſtanding the exiſtence of a ſupreme Legiſlative Body, the controuling ſovereign power, in the modern interpretation of it, remains in the abeyance in the great maſs of its ſubjects. This doctrine, Sir, is the fertile ſource of all the miſchiefs which have convulſed the civilized world to its center, and which, wherever it has ſpread, has involved both Government and people in one chaos of miſery. I confeſs, Sir, that it has been the ſubject of much anxiety to thoſe who have had the arduous taſk of conducting the affairs of this country at a period beyond example critical and dangerous; and it is not without concern that I perceive it brought forward in a more latent form, after being foiled in its open undiſguiſed attack. It is untrue, Sir, that any rational aſſemblage of men can exiſt under Heaven, without delegating a ſupreme unlimited power to their Government. The queſtion whether that Government exceeds the powers neceſſary to the preſervation of ſociety, or abuſes it to its diſſolution, is a queſtion of perilous reſponſibility, too delicate to come within the code of human regulation, or form a chapter of human juriſprudence. The next obſtacle, Sir, which has been thrown in the way of identifying the intereſt and exiſtence of the two countries, ariſes from an erroneous national pride. Upon this ſubject an appeal has been deluſively made to the quick feelings of a nation diſtinguiſhed for its high ſenſe of honour. It has been told, that no compenſation can be made to them for the ſurrender of their in-

dependence. I am really desirous that Gentlemen would dispassionately examine the principle upon which this objection is grounded. Do they mean to say that any society of men, comprized within a given local district, who are desirous to enlarge their sphere, by uniting themselves with other societies of the same description upon equal terms, are by the very act of Union less members of an independent community, or less in possession of all the privileges which they formerly enjoyed, whether civil, political, or religious? Let us trace the history of those nations of Europe who exult most in the pride of independence, and we shall easily be convinced that they never could have attained that lofty eminence of glory which they now enjoy, if their forefathers had acted upon those narrow principles—Europe, Sir, would have still remained a prey to all the miseries of sanguinary warfare and barbarous anarchy, which are peculiarly incident to petty States." Mr. Pitt then touched upon the peculiar circumstances of the relative situation of Great Britain and Ireland, which rendered a Union desirable between the two Countries—the unity of their established religion, the sameness of their language, laws, and manners. He admitted that the number of absentees would be increased by it, but contended that the advantages accruing from the influx of British capital would more than countervail all the inconveniencies that could be urged against it —" The same clamour which had been raised against it in Dublin, prevailed in Edinburgh against the Union with Scotland; yet the population and wealth of the latter was more than doubled since that period, and the increase of Glasgow in both those respects was in the proportion of six to one. It had been argued, that after an Union the commercial privileges of Ireland would be more insecure than at present; but he had already proved that all her present advantages flowed from the generous acts of the British Parliament; and it was as futile to suppose, that, after an Union, they would make any more distinction between the Commerce of Great Britain and Ireland, than they now do between the interests of Lancashire and Yorkshire. But this apprehension, and that of Ireland being subjected to an unequal taxation, was practically obviated by reviewing the conduct which England had held towards Scotland. As in the Union with the latter, he should propose, that the Revenue to be raised in Ireland should be in a certain limited proportion for a number of years. He should now proceed to read a series of Resolutions, upon the general principles which he had developed. It was his wish that they should be deliberately examined in a Committee of the whole House; and if upon due investigation they should be adopted, he thought it would be advisable to lay them before the Crown, stating their object in solemnly recording them, and leaving it to his Majesty to communicate them to his Parliament of Ireland, when to his wisdom should seem meet."

The Resolutions were then read, to the following purport:

I. THAT in order to promote and secure the essential Interests of Great Britain and Ireland, and to consolidate the Strength, Power, and Resources of the British Empire, It will be advisable

to concur in ſuch Meaſures as may beſt tend to unite the Two Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into One Kingdom, in ſuch Manner, and on ſuch Terms and Conditions, as may be eſtabliſhed by Acts of the reſpective Parliaments of His Majeſty's ſaid Kingdoms.

II. That it would be fit to propoſe, as the Firſt Article, to ſerve as a Baſis of the ſaid Union, That the ſaid Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland ſhall, upon a Day to be agreed upon, be united into One Kingdom, by the Name of "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

III That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That the Succeſſion to the Monarchy and the Imperial Crown of the ſaid United Kingdom ſhall continue limited and ſettled in the ſame Manner as the Imperial Crown of the ſaid Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now ſtands limited and ſettled, according to the exiſting Laws, and to the Terms of the Union between England and Scotland *.

IV. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That the ſaid United Kingdom be repreſented in One and the ſame Parliament, to be ſtiled "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;" and that ſuch a Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and ſuch a Number of Members in the Houſe of Commons, as ſhall be hereafter agreed upon by Acts of the reſpective Parliaments as aforeſaid, ſhall ſit and vote in the ſaid Parliament on the Part of Ireland, as ſhall be ſummoned, choſen, and returned in ſuch Manner as ſhall be fixed by an Act of Parliament of Ireland previous to the ſaid Union; and that every Member hereafter to ſit and Vote in the ſaid Parliament of the United Kingdom, ſhall, until the ſaid Parliament ſhall otherwiſe provide, take and ſubſcribe the ſame Oaths, and make the ſame Declarations, as are by Law required to be taken, ſubſcribed, and made by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

V. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That the Churches of England and Ireland, and the Doctrine, Worſhip, Diſcipline, and Government thereof, ſhall be preſerved as now by Law eſtabliſhed.

VI. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That His Majeſty's Subjects in Ireland ſhall at all times hereafter be entitled to the ſame Privileges, and be on the ſame Footing, in reſpect of Trade and Navigation, in all Ports and Places belonging to Great Britain, and in all Caſes with reſpect to which Treaties ſhall be made by His Majeſty, His Heirs or Succeſſors, with any Foreign Power, as His Majeſty's Subjects in Great Britain: —That no Duty ſhall be impoſed on the Import or Export between Great Britain and Ireland of any Articles now Duty free; and that on other Articles there ſhall be eſtabliſhed, for a Time to be limited, ſuch a moderate Rate of equal Duties as ſhall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the reſpective Parliaments; ſubject, after the Expiration of ſuch limited Time, to be diminiſhed equally with reſpect to both Kingdoms, but in

* See De Foe's Hiſtory of the Union.

no

no Caſe to be encreaſed:—That all Articles which may at any Time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from Foreign Parts, ſhall be importable through either Kingdom into the other, ſubject to the like Duties and Regulations as if the ſame were imported directly from Foreign Parts:—That where any Articles, the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of either Kingdom, are ſubject to any internal Duty in one Kingdom, ſuch countervailing Duties (over and above any Duties on Import to be fixed as aforeſaid ſhall be impoſed as ſhall be neceſſary to prevent any Inequality in that Reſpect:—And that all other Matters of Trade and Commerce, other than the foregoing, and than ſuch others as may, before the Union, be ſpecially agreed upon for the due Encouragement of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the reſpective Kingdoms, ſhall remain to be regulated from Time to Time by the United Parliament.

VII. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That the Charge ariſing from the Payment of the intereſt or Sinking Fund for the Reduction of the Principal, of the Debt incurred in either Kingdom before the Union, ſhall continue to be ſeparately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland reſpectively:—That, for a Number of Years to be limited, the future Ordinary Expences of the United Kingdom, in Peace or War, ſhall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to ſuch Proportions as ſhall be eſtabliſhed by the reſpective Parliaments previous to the Union; and that, after the Expiration of the Time to be ſo limited, the Proportion ſhall not be liable to be varied, except according to ſuch Rules and Principles as ſhall be in like Manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

VIII. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That all Laws in force at the Time of the Union, and all the Courts of Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction within the reſpective Kingdoms, ſhall remain as now by Law eſtabliſhed within the ſame; ſubject only to ſuch Alterations or Regulations from Time to Time as Circumſtances may appear, to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to require.

He now moved, that the Speaker ſhould leave the Chair.

Mr. *Sheridan* roſe, and ſpoke to the following effect:—'Sir, I know how difficult it always is to make any impreſſion on men's minds, even by argument and obvious fact, if the imagination has been dwelling with delight on great or difficult ſubjects, or the attention detained by animated and flowery declamation. The Right Hon. Gentleman, who has juſt ſat down, with a great diſplay of eloquence, introduced this queſtion, and only talents great as his own could be expected to produce that effect in their exertion, which it is to be apprehended the ſpeech the Houſe has juſt heard very generally produced. It is, however, eaſy on ſome queſtions to arouſe thoſe feelings, in the fulneſs of which the moſt vigilant may be deceived, and the moſt cautious miſled. But much as I admire the Right Hon. Gentleman's talents in debate—indeed in the ſame proportion that I do admire thoſe talents, I muſt critically purſue him in the mazes of his dextrous declamation—I muſt narrowly

narrowly watch him from the avenues to national prejudice, up to the ſource and fountain of national paſſion. The Right Hon. Gentleman yields to no man in charms of diction; and as beauty captivates ſometimes to ſuch a degree that reaſon is ſuperſeded, and the ſober calculations of prudence abandoned for the more dazzling, though airy ſpeculations of romantic but opulent fancy; ſo do the powers of his mind in the ſelection and application of epithets, faſcinate the gay, and they may ſeduce the unſuſpecting. There are ſome queſtions on the diſcuſſion of which it becomes the Members of this Houſe to be ſuſpicious of talents and eloquence, whatever may be the weight of phraſe in which declarations of rectitude of intention may be conceived, and in ſpite of every appearance of honeſty of purpoſe. I hope, Sir, the Houſe will not be led away by the ſeductions of eloquence, and the attractive force of talent; but that every man who hears me, every man who cheriſhes in ſincerity a love of freedom, and a genuine reſpect for the principles of that Conſtitution which in the purity of its operations is freedom, that every well-wiſher of the Britiſh Empire, that thoſe who entertain not enmity but friendſhip towards Ireland, will this night diſtinguiſh between the flowing and rapid elocution of an admired Orator, and the ſteady and well tempered voice of unaffected reaſon. The whole world knows that never was there a period when fine ſpeeches more powerfully affected the public, and never a time when, from fancied ſecurity or habitual indifference, the public appeared leſs eager profoundly to examine any queſtion. Thoſe who cannot be hurried along with the torrent of that impetuous declamation, which more or leſs excites the aſtoniſhment of us all, will, however, pauſe to recollect the arguments, and purſue the ſpeech of the Right Hon. Gentleman in its elaborate detail. But, conceiving as I do, that the Houſe is not free from the influence ever attained over eaſy tempers by bold and ingenious ſophiſtry, apprehenſive that we are in the ſituation of men who juſt begin to free themſelves, by a collected vigorous effort, from the chains impoſed by beauty, or the ſeductive allurements of an amorous ſportive imagination, I muſt adjure the Houſe not to diſpoſe of a queſtion that is perhaps to decide for ever whether a great and generous Nation is to retain its independence, and by implication, to determine whether a ſet of Repreſentatives, choſen by a free people, muſt vote themſelves out of exiſtence, and give up the liberties, the property, the acknowledged conſtitutional rights of their conſtituents, to the domination of a Power, that under the maſk of friendſhip, has introduced among them a force, originally ſaid to be intended ſolely for their defence againſt a daring inſidious enemy, whom all deprecate, but who is not more to be deteſted than the pretended friend who aſſiſts only that he may acquire confidence enough to delude, and ſtrength enough to deſtroy. I muſt think the Houſe has been hurried along by the Right Hon. Gentleman from one degree of tranſport to another, until, in the groves of his Elyſium, they have been elated with ſcenes of grandeur, and fatigued with that variety, or enfeebled with that richneſs of proſpect, which is to render enquiry loathſome, and which will inevitably prepare the human

mind

mind for the reception of any doctrines, however wild; and any assurance of future advantage, howevery illusory. I took an opportunity last week of opposing the measure of Legislative Union with Ireland, in the first stage of the discussion, which, as matter of course, was to lead to that question. I did so then, as well from a conviction that measures of such magnitude and of such novelty should always be opposed in the infancy of their progress, as in the contemplation of what I naturally anticipated would be the effect of the eloquence of the Right Hon Gentleman. I then said what I am at this moment prepared to repeat, after much considering the subject, that under the present circumstances of Ireland, in this crisis of her convulsed and necessarily disordered system of polity and general Government, it is not only impolitic, but unsafe to urge, nay even to agitate, the discussion of topics, in the issues of which are to be seen developing themselves, the poison and the horrors which are to lay the the most hardy and stout of heart prostrate at the feet of a British Minister—that are to intimidate and appal the most heroic spirits. Ireland in her present temper must be beaten into this measure, and that Minister who shall make the bold experiment of flogging a whole nation into stupid beings, insensible alike to the duty she may owe to herself, insensible to the rights of the present generation, and the interests of the race yet unborn, as much as to the arrogance and cupidity of those who shall inflict the blow, or direct the torture—such a Minister may have secured his minions, but it may not be altogether unbecoming him, if he be desirous ultimately to prevail, to measure his power by the force of his antagonists, and in the estimation of his means of victory, to seek an antidote against national pride and local attachments. It was after very solemnly and very fully considering these, and matters such as these, that I opposed on the evening to which I have alluded the measure at present under discussion; but the Right Hon. Gentleman appeared at that time, as he continues to do this evening, to think differently. But, except the Right Hon. Gentleman and some few who sit near him, I scarce suppose there are many persons in the Country, I hope but very few Members in this House, who have not seen good reason within this day or two, entirely to change their opinions of this great constitutional question. Seeing the manner in which the subject was brought forward in Ireland, and in the recollection of the fate of the question in the Parliament of that kingdom, it might be doubted whether the Right Hon. Gentleman would persevere in the measure; but when we consider how solemnly he has pledged himself that it should be the favourite object of the remainder of his political life to effect a legislative Union of the two kingdoms, that no weight of personal labour, that no loss of popularity, that no opposition of friends, that no clamour of opponents on this, or on the other side of the water should deter him from pursuing that object—from doing that which he held to be necessary to the preservation of Ireland, necessary, indeed to the existence of the two countries: we are not to wonder if to this hour he continues to set all experience at defiance, and, in the face of the Irish nation, to spurn the assertion of her rights, to fawn and

flatter

flatter her guileleſs mind, and by ſeeming to reſpect her declared unequivocal opinion, to lull her into inactivity, the more ſucceſsfully to enſlave her for ever. But let not the Right Hon. Gentleman deceive himſelf whilſt he is exerting his ingenuity to deceive Ireland. Let him remember, Sir, that ſome plots have been ſo cloſe wrought, ſome meaſures of ſurprize and deluſion ſo intricately planned, and attempted to be carried into effect with ſuch novelty of means, that the authors, the actors, even the ſubordinate characters in the drama, have been themſelves entangled in the mazes they have contrived for innocence, and overwhelmed under the ruins of that fabric which they have erected to overawe the independent. The Right Hon. Gentleman has this day not quite given us the ſame ſtrong pledge of his determination to perſevere in the preſent meaſure, which on a former day the Houſe received from him. We are even now to take for granted that he will perſiſt in it; but although he may perſevere, thank God the Houſe has not given a pledge to ſupport him; and I hope and truſt they will not entertain it at all. Sir, the Right Hon Gentleman has ſet England and Ireland in a perilous ſituation. He aſſumes in argument, and we are to infer that he thinks ſo in fact, that his power muſt be committed againſt the force of opinion in Ireland, and that the exiſtence of Ireland as an independent nation is incompatible with his exiſtence as a Miniſter. I hope the Houſe will check his raſhneſs: I hope we are not to be precipitated into a war againſt the feelings, the prejudices, the paſſions, and againſt the ſecurity of the people of Ireland! The Right Hon. Gentleman has ſown already the moſt frightful diſſentions in that unfortunate country. He has divided its Parliament againſt itſelf. He has held it up to ſcorn by libelling its meaſures and traducing its wiſdom, and he has yet to array the Britiſh Parliament againſt it with all that pertinacity which diſtinguiſhes ignorance, and with all the fierceneſs of men who are to be told that a country ſtruggling for its liberties, only wages the war of faction—only wields the weapons of diſaffection and treaſon. I now come to that part of the Right Hon. Gentleman's ſpeech, in which he has commented with ſuch freedom of manner—has combated with ſuch aſperity of tone, and ſpeech made ſome time or other by a Right Hon. Perſon of the ſiſter kingdom—Mr. Foſter. And Sir, if without breach of order, I could ſuppoſe that there is in our gallery a ſtranger who has been a Member of the Legiſlature of Ireland, or in the habits of hearing its debates, I am perſuaded he would at once imagine the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) has detained you and the Houſe almoſt half an hour to hear him in reply to the ſpeech of that Gentleman. Now, Sir, I think I can ſhew you, that the arguments drawn by the Right Hon. Gentleman oppoſite to me, from the topics in the ſpeech of the Hon. Member of the ſiſter kingdom, do not in any one tittle apply to the preſent queſtion. He has attempted, indeed, to ſhew the inconſiſtency of ſentiment by which he tells us, the conduct of Mr. Foſter is to be diſtinguiſhed. Mr. Foſter's opinion was, that the adoption of the Commercial Propoſitions was neceſſary to the exiſtence of Ireland, and that they could not be rejected without incurring the certain riſk of ſowing diſſentions, and of exciting

exiting commercial jealouſies. This, according to the Right Hon. Gentleman, was that Stateſman's opinion in 1785, and the inconſiſtency conſiſts, as he has this night told us, in his having inſiſted in his publiſhed letters, that the adjuſtment in 1782 was final. Now, Sir, the Right Hon. Gentleman himſelf entertained the ſame opinion at the period alluded to, and inſtead of the tame language of Mr. Foſter, that the rejection of thoſe propoſitions would lead to commercial jealouſies—we then had the daſhing periods of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of Great Britain ringing in our ears —that if thoſe propoſitions were not adopted, he could not continue to hold his ſituation. Yet neither had any ill conſequence ariſen to Ireland from the rejection of them, nor had that, which would have been a ſtill greater calamity, befallen the country— the reſignation of the Right Hon. Gentleman. Now, how does the argument ſtand as it really affects Mr. Foſter? Why, he imagined that the commercial proſperity of Ireland would be advantaged, if thoſe propoſitions were adopted; and certainly there was no inconſiſtency of ſentiment in his preſent oppoſition to Legiſlative Union, becauſe the queſtion of the propoſitions was purely commercial, whilſt that of the preſent period is one which is to decide the independence of the Iriſh Parliament. But, Sir, the principal reaſon why I take up this queſtion now is, that the Right Hon. Gentleman has this evening developed his plan of intimidation and corruption. He ſays, that the commercial advantages derived by Ireland from her connection with this country, are neceſſary to her exiſtence; and ſince, in the ſame breath, he adds, that to have thoſe advantages continued to her, Union is indiſpenſable, the inference obviouſly is, that we muſt abandon all her commercial advantages, if ſhe reject the proffered alliance with Great Britain. Hence I do contend, Sir, that the people of Ireland cannot come with unbiaſſed minds to this diſcuſſion; and it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe that a free choice is left to the Parliament of that Country. If we wanted additional corroboration of the evidence that ſuch is his ſyſtem, we had it amply afforded us in thoſe parts of his detail which followed. He tells you Ireland ought to conſent to a Union, becauſe ſhe is incapable of defending herſelf againſt her internal and external enemies without the aſſiſtance of her powerful neighbour." [A cry of hear! hear!] "No ſuch inference can be fairly drawn," was whiſpered by Mr. Pitt.] "Mr. Sheridan inſiſted that the inference was irreſiſtible—that unleſs ſhe conſented to a Union, Ireland was to be deprived of all her commercial advantages—Is this generous: is it fit to hold out ſuch language to Ireland: is it wiſe to preſs the diſcuſſion at this moment, and force all Ireland loudly to aſk, not indeed free from anger, Why have not we had thoſe advantages yielded to us, on which, according to the opinion of the Britiſh Miniſter, our proſperity depends? We muſt owe it to the injurious policy of Great Britain, exerciſed in various acts of reſtraint and privation theſe 300 years paſt, that we have been deprived of thoſe advantages which God and Nature ſo eminently adapt our country to afford us." But, Sir, let his Majeſty's miniſters grant to Ireland thoſe advantages of which they boaſt—they may be conceded to her without Union—they can

be improved by her without abjectly ſurrendering her independence. Thus much with regard to her means of acquiring diſtinction as a commercial nation. And as to her power of defending herſelf, does not the Right Hon. Gentleman know that her Volunteers have defended Ireland? and what they were equal to in a period of conſiderable danger, during the American war, when the enemy rode triumphant on her coaſts and in our channel, ſurely they are at preſent as capable of atchieving in the zenith of our envied ſuperiority as a naval power. It is a moſt cruel taunt uttered in the face of the whole people of Ireland, to ſay, that while you have 40,000 Britiſh troops in the heart of their country, you will awe them by the preſence of ſuch a force; reproach them with weakneſs, notwithſtanding that you have had 200,000 of her beſt inhabitants to ſupport you in the preſent war, while 100,000 fighting men of their nation have fallen in your battles in the Weſt Indies and elſewhere. What is this but to ſay, it is true you have aſſiſted us; but you are now naked; you are ignorant; you are uncivilized; you are weak; and if you do not accept from us the benefits we offer you, we will proceed to confer them upon you by force. Look to what the Right Hon. Gentleman ſays, when he tells you that he will leave it to the unbiaſſed judgment of the Iriſh people, and the independent diſcretion of the Iriſh Parliament finally to decide on the preſent queſtion. Are the recent diſmiſſals from office in that kingdom the proofs he would exhibit to us of his ſettled purpoſe to leave it to that Parliament to adopt or reject the meaſure. It is truly a mockery to tell the Parliament this: Parliament muſt ſee that what has been done in the caſe of individuals may alſo be acted over again in the inſtance of the Legiſlature; and that the ſame power which effected the diſmiſſal of Sir John Parnell, may be ſucceſsfully employed to diſſolve the Parliament. Will Gentlemen only be ſo kind to themſelves as to reflect for a moment on the tendency of ſuch proceedings. If in the Parliament of the ſiſter kingdom thoſe meaſures are to be adopted, the ſame and a worſe tyranny may be acted in our own. Sir, I am afraid the political creed of the adherents of the Miniſter in Ireland has been adopted by his ſupporters in the Britiſh Senate. I do ſincerely believe, that if any one perſon who now ſupports his Majeſty's Miniſters were to vote with me this night, he would be diſmiſſed to-morrow from all his places. We are to reflect on theſe things, Sir, while we carry along our minds to that part of the Right Hon. Gentleman's Speech, where he peremptorily ſays—"I do think the meaſure good for Ireland and good for this Country, but time ſhall be given to the people to examine it—time ſhall be given for their heats to ſubſide—time ſhall be given to the Parliaments of the two Countries fully and deliberately to diſcuſs it." Now, Sir, what do theſe fine limbs of a ſentence collectively mean? Why that time is to be given for the operation of corruption--time to intimidate the people of Ireland—time for the peremptory diſmiſſal of the oppoſers of the meaſures—time for the diſſolution of the Parliament. [Here Mr. Sheridan, with ſome efforts of irony, expreſſed his ſurpriſe, that among the ſupporters of the meaſure was his honourable friend Mr. Canning, whom he ſaid had breathed the pure morning air of manly thought

and ſentiment, but who having been latterly ſurrounded by the atmoſphere of a foul corruption, was now tainted by its peſtiferous blaſts, and ſought no other meaſure for his guilt, but in an attack on the independence and right of the whole nation of Ireland.] With reſpect to the meaſure in an abſtract point of view, I own, ſir, I am friendly to a cloſe connexion between this country and Ireland; but the right honourable gentleman ſays he will wait for a day, an hour of greater weakneſs, and well he knows that it is always in his power to create ſuch a moment, and wring from Ireland her legiſlative independence. This plan is not one of the moment: we muſt either not believe the miniſter, or take for granted that it is as old as the commercial propoſitions. He indeed calls it a beneficial plan of Union, but if he muſt be paying compliments to himſelf on his meaſures, ſurely, ſir, the right honourable gentleman might have been a little ſparing of the miniſters of 1782, among whom were the Duke of Portland and ſome other perſons at preſent in his Majeſty's councils. But if he has always thought that only Union can guarantee the exiſtence of Ireland, why not bring forward ſome meaſure of conceſſion, ſomething for the advantage of Ireland in the courſe of the laſt fifteen years. I do aſſure you, ſir, I dread the conſequences of this crooked policy. If a lord lieutenant is to be ſent over at one time with propoſitions of Catholic emancipation, if when the cup is not only in their ſight, but at their lips, you are to daſh it in their face, I know not, indeed, I almoſt ſhudder to conjecture, what will be the conſequence. With this conduct, freſh in the minds of Iriſhmen, it will put them on the alert, and may induce them to take every ſtep which ſhall intimidate the right honourable gentleman, and drive him from his project of annihilating their independence. If the honourable gentleman ever conſiders the infirmities of human nature, why does not he think of the infirmities of the poor and diſtreſſed Iriſh: why does he provoke their irritable minds: why does he heighten the gloom that now darkens their proſpects? I have ſaid, ſir, that Britiſh connexion has a warm friend in me: that at all times I have been decidedly hoſtile to the Union of Ireland with France. But when that nation finds the right honourable gentleman exerting his power to divide them that he may ultimately enſlave them, it will, I fear, be enough to provoke them to look forward to any kind of connexion by which they may fancy they can repel his attacks. I would aſk him, ſir, what right we have to ſay that he will drive them to the adoption of any means of aſſerting their independence againſt his innovation; and feeling this, I do conjure him to abandon the project. [Here Mr. Sheridan vindicated the meaſure of 1782, and maintained that the whole of Mr. Pitt's arguments on that ſubject went to this,—that while he thought it neceſſary to do ſomething more for Ireland than was yielded to her by that adjuſtment, he had now been 15 years a Miniſter, and had never brought forward any thing.] Would the Right Hon. Gentleman ſay that he has till now brought forward nothing, becauſe Ireland was at no period of her political exiſtence ſo weak as ſhe is at this moment. It is a terrible thing, Sir, if Miniſters are to look forward to the feuds and miſeries of that people, to draw from them the means of conqueſt. The

Right

Right Honourable Gentleman ſays, that there was a majority for the meaſure in the Houſe of Lords, and a large body favourable to it out of doors. Of what conſiſted that majority? Of a body of intereſted Peers, or of men who had not the firmneſs to reſign their places to maintain the independence of their country." Having gone over his old ground reſpecting the ſituation in which the Union would relatively place the Catholics and the Proteſtants, Mr. Sheridan obſerved, that he had heard a great deal about foreign Stateſmen, and what they thought on the preſent queſtion—that it was their opinion it would drive France from her project of invaſion againſt Ireland. This was the queſtion; but he would aſk, was not the Right Hon. Gentleman an ally of France on the preſent occaſion? He was told France had increaſed her preparations ſince the meaſure was firſt introduced; and if the Miniſter would diſtract and weaken Ireland by his obſtinacy, he feared ſhe would effect the ſeparation of Ireland. Mr. Sheridan next rapidly examined the queſtion of experience, and maintained that having ſtepped by experience as far as it related to Ireland, referring wholly to the caſe of Scotland, Mr. Pitt was not entitled to infer that Ireland would be benefited by Union; it was all gueſs work and hazard. With reſpect to the argument, that the Legiſlature might differ on great conſtitutional queſtions, I think, ſaid Mr. Sheridan, if we look to the period of 100 years, during which Ireland has been tranquil and co-operated with us, we ſhall find good reaſon for preſuming that ſhe can not only do better with her own independent Parliament, than as a province of Great Britain, but that ſhe is incapable of deſerting us in the hour of difficulty, or of not co-operating with us in any criſis of danger.—He diſcuſſed over again the queſtion of the Regency debated by him on a former evening, and contended that if his queſtion reſpecting the independence of Parliament were carried as far as it would go, it would be found to convey one of the groſſeſt libels that ever was publiſhed againſt the Britiſh Conſtitution, which he was proud to conſider the beſt baſis of Government that ever exiſted in any Country. Gentlemen were fond of regularly mixing with their arguments a great deal about the animoſities and crimes of France. And one Hon. Gentleman knew ſo much more of theſe matters, that in the funeral oration which he recently delivered over the departed greatneſs of the King of Sardinia, he had found a ſon for that Monarch, though he never had a ſon; but this deepened the horrors of the ſcene, and, as a poetical licence, was of courſe to be tolerated. Jacobiniſm was another inſtrument of terror on ſolemn occaſions. And now, what was Jacobiniſm?—A Jacobin is a man who, under the pretence of defending a people, and of giving them commercial advantages, deprives them at a ſweep of their independence and their property. And, ſaid Mr. Sheridan, "Mr. Pitt, according to my hypotheſis, is the greateſt Jacobin in England. He will take the advantage of the weakneſs of the Iriſh, and give them a coarſe fraternal hug. The Hon. Gentleman ſpeaks of his great favours to Ireland, that he went to war to defend her, and to prevent France from making dangerous acquiſitions. Have we ſucceeded? Perhaps the Right Hon. Gentleman

tleman means to participate the advantages of the war with Ireland—[Hear! Hear!)—if any advantage it is to participate in the 250 millions of debt accumulated ſince the war." He urged his former arguments againſt the ſyſtem of the Land-owners, and reſumed his poſition that ignorance was only to be corrected, and civilization introduced by changing this ſyſtem. It was ſaid that the miſchief reſulted from abſentees; and this miſchief was to be cured by an Abſentee Parliament. The Union would cauſe emigration. He combated generally the arguments of Mr. Pitt on the topic of the ſurrender of the rights of its Parliament by Scotland. He maintained the Britiſh Parliament did not exceed its rights, or at all act inconſiſtent with the character of a free Legiſlature, in accepting of the independence of men who had ſurrendered it into its hands. Still it was true, that the act of the Scotch Parliament was an act of power, and not of right: yet if ever Ireland gave up its independence in a ſimilar manner, much as he might regret it, the queſtion would be altered, and he muſt act according to thoſe feelings which might be induced by the occaſion. He cloſed his ſpeech with ſtating, that he did not mean to oppoſe the Speaker's leaving the Chair; but would propoſe two Reſolutions, the firſt giving a pledge that Miniſters ſhould not purſue a ſyſtem of corruption and intimidation in Ireland; and that no meaſure ſhould be adopted without the concurrence and perfect approbation of the Legiſlature and People of Ireland; and the next, that whoever ſhall adopt a ſyſtem of intimidation and corruption, ſhall be conſidered an enemy to his Majeſty's Government.

Lord *Hawkeſbury* was not ſurpriſed at the oppoſition which the Hon. Gentleman had given to this meaſure, but he was ſurpriſed at the grounds upon which he had placed it, eſpecially when he recollected his conduct during the laſt Seſſion of Parliament: where was the Hon. Gentleman's reſpect and deference for the Iriſh Legiſlature, when he made a motion for an enquiry into the cauſes of a formidable rebellion which exiſted in the ſiſter kingdom? What conſiſtency was there in moving for that enquiry, when, according to the principles the Hon. Gentleman laid down, the Houſe had no power to carry any remedy that ſhould occur to them into effect? Now when that rebellion was put down and peace reſtored, a propoſition, calculated to promote the ſecurity of both countries, was objected to, on the ground that the Houſe might not interfere with the Iriſh Parliament: but it was certainly very extraordinary, that this oppoſition ſhould come from the ſame perſon who ſo lately thought it the duty of the Houſe to adopt a line of conduct ſo perfectly the reverſe of that which he now propoſed for them. It had been objected, that the meaſure was attempted to be carried by intimidation; no proof however had been produced in ſupport of that charge. His Right Hon. Friend aſked for nothing more than that the ſubject ſhould undergo that calm and deliberate diſcuſſion which its importance merited. The Hon. Gentleman had aſſerted, that all the people of Ireland were againſt the meaſure. This was certainly not the fact. It was evident that there was a large party in Dublin againſt it; but there

were

were other places, not of inferior importance, particularly Cork, in which a great majority had declared for it. If however it ſhould appear, that the people of Ireland were againſt a meaſure which was for the advantage of both countries, he ſhould not be one who would wiſh to force it upon them, but he ſhould certainly wiſh to force them to conſider it; ſuch a meaſure would undoubtedly require much diſcuſſion and great deliberation before it could be carried, and he truſted, that upon more mature reflection, many who now oppoſed it in Ireland would be convinced of its utility. The Government both here and in Ireland wiſhed to ſtand upon public opinion: ſhould that opinion, after every inveſtigation, be declared againſt an Union, he ſhould lament the deciſion; but he never would regret that the experiment had been tried. The Hon. Gentleman had alluded to what he called a ſyſtem of corruption, which he pretended was exerciſed in Ireland, and it was neceſſary to enquire what ground he had for this charge. It was true that certain Gentlemen had been removed from their official ſituations in Ireland; but did this imply any corruption? If in a meaſure which a Miniſter ſhould think eſſential to the general intereſts of the Empire, he ſhould be oppoſed by thoſe who uſually acted with him, would he be acting conſiſtently if he retained them in office? When a noble Lord (Earl Fitzwilliam), who was placed at the head of the Government of Ireland, attempted to diſmiſs ſeveral perſons who held official ſituations in the Adminiſtration of the country, was it not contended by an Hon. Gentleman and his friends that it was very improper to call in queſtion the exercise of that Noble Lord's authority? yet it would be recollected, that the Noble Lord alluded to, had ſtated as his reaſon for the changes he intended to make, the difference of opinion which ſubſiſted between himſelf and other Members of Adminiſtration upon queſtions of the firſt magnitude: indeed, it was evident, that no Government could go on, if upon great and important national points its members were at variance, and entertained opinions upon any queſtion ſo irreconcilable as to prevent them from acting together. He agreed with the Hon. Gentleman in deprecating that ſyſtem which had long prevailed with reſpect to Ireland: no one more than he abhorred the code of laws, and the whole policy which England had for ages exerciſed towards Ireland; but with reſpect to the ſettlement of 1782, he never could conſider that as a final adjuſtment: It was evident, that it was not ſo conſidered by Parliament, nor by thoſe who promoted it, and experience had ſhewn that it was inſufficient. By the Laws and Conſtitution of Ireland we are told, that whoever was Sovereign of this country, was alſo Sovereign of that, but as it had already been obſerved, the Parliament of Ireland and the Parliament of Great Britain, decided upon different principles on the queſtion of the Regency, and it was merely by accident, that the Executive Governments as well as the Legiſlature, were not different in both countries. The Hon. Gentleman had ſaid, that Ireland, ſince 1782, had been encreaſing in commerce and proſperity; but he could not conceive how a country ſhould be encreaſing in commerce and wealth, and yet remain barbarous and uncivilized, unleſs ſome evil exiſted to

counteract

counteract theſe advantages. The argument of encreaſing wealth, therefore, could not prevail againſt the Union. Since it was evident, that the ſyſtem under which Ireland was governed, was ſome how or other conſtitutionally defective. The population of Ireland had long been divided into two diſtinct claſſes. The Catholics who compoſed two thirds, or, according to ſome, three-fourths of the inhabitants, were the deſcendants of the original natives of the country. The Proteſtants, who were originally Engliſhmen, formed the other third. It was not in nature but that there muſt be much hoſtility between two Sects ſo ſituated, and ſo prejudiced againſt each other. What then was propoſed was to melt them all down in the ſame crucible, in order to do away all the cauſes that create diſſenſion. He wiſhed to give to the people of Ireland, the ſame ſecurity of property as their brethren in England poſſeſs: the ſame pledge of future proſperity and happineſs. What he wiſhed to ſee removed, and which was the real great grievance, was the feeling of exaſperation and dread that ſubſiſted between the two parties: this never could be removed but by an Union, and with it there was no doubt but that it would gradually die away. When he looked to the Union with Scotland, he ſaw nothing but a ſeries of benefits and advantages reſulting from it for that country. Every Scotch writer, Robertſon, Hume, Smith, &c. all had ſtated the Union to be a bleſſing to their country. This ſurely was not ſaid by them for want of national pride, ſince there were no people more remarkable for love and attachment to their country than the Scotch. He ſhould next notice what the Hon. Gentleman had ſaid relative to Ireland ſacrificing her political power. This ſacrifice, however, was not objected to by the moſt zealous partizans of the Settlement of 1782. When papers relative to the commencement of the preſent war were moved for in the Iriſh Parliament, Mr. Grattan oppoſed their production, not becauſe he thought the war was juſt, for that was a queſtion into which he would not enter, but becauſe it was his opinion that in all wars the two countries muſt ſtand or fall together, and that when Great Britain engaged in hoſtilities, Ireland had no other courſe to take, but implicitly to ſupport her. Now, as in all matters of Imperial policy, it appeared that Ireland muſt blindly follow Great Britain, it would appear that ſhe would make a leſs ſacrifice of her political power if ſhe had a voice in the Imperial Legiſlature, than ſhe does in her preſent ſituation. The importance of being a Member of the Imperial Parliament would alſo be greater than that of being a Member of the Parliament of Ireland only. When he conſidered all the beneficial advantages ariſing from the happy influence of the Britiſh Conſtitution and Britiſh Parliament, he could not avoid wiſhing that influence to be extended to a ſtill greater portion of the human race. An Union appeared to him the only means of tranquillizing the country, and preventing the return of inſurrections ſuch as thoſe they had lately ſeen. Every thing, he inſiſted, called upon the Houſe to adopt the meaſure which his Hon. Friend had propoſed. Let the meaſure reſt upon the opinion of the Parliaments of each kingdom—that opinion would doubtleſs be regulated by the general ſentiment of the public at large.

Mr. *Sheridan* explained.

Doctor

Doctor *Lawrence* ſaid, he wiſhed to take notice of ſomething that fell from the noble Lord who ſpoke laſt, relative to the inconſiſtency of thoſe Gentlemen who at preſent oppoſed an Union with Ireland, and who had laſt Seſſion moved for an enquiry into the ſtate of that country. He inſiſted that there was no inconſiſtency whatever in their conduct; becauſe, when they had moved for that enquiry, they did not mean that the Britiſh ſhould aſſume any authority over the Iriſh Parliament. He did not vote for the amendment that had been propoſed to the addreſs on a former night by an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) becauſe he did not mean to ſay any thing on the buſineſs in that ſtage of it: he was alſo at that time ignorant of the opinion that might be expreſſed on the ſubject by the Iriſh Parliament; and the meſſage intimated that it ſhould be ſubmitted to the Legiſlatures of both kingdoms, he had deſired therefore to wait and hear what ſhould be done in Ireland. But if the amendment which the Hon. Gentleman had moved, could have been the means of preventing any intimation from being given to the Iriſh Parliament, he would have voted for it. The Noble Lord had argued, that the late diſmiſſals of men in Ireland were the ſame with thoſe which Earl Fitzwilliam had, during his adminiſtration, attempted to make there. No more authority was exerciſed on the one occaſion, than had been intended to be exerciſed on the other; and theſe meaſures were conſidered as neceſſary, on the principle that there might be no diſparity of opinions amongſt the Members of the Government. He inſiſted that theſe two caſes were very different: the preſent was not a queſtion of a Government nature, nor one which required that unanimity in the Miniſters of Government. It was a queſtion for the uniting together of two countries which ought to meet by affection; and if they did not, it ſignified very little by what kind of parchment bonds they were to be united. If Gentlemen thought it poſſible that thoſe countries could at this time unite by affection, let them look at the majority who voted againſt the Union in the Iriſh Houſe of Commons, and conſider what deſcription of perſons they were. In the majority of 111, there was a much greater number of country members than in the minority of 106. This circumſtance proved, that the ſenſe of the country was againſt the meaſure. As a friend, therefore, to the general intereſts of the empire, he would not wiſh to proceed in any plan that might tend to promote jealouſy and diſcontent. He ſaw nothing in the Reſolutions which the Right Honourable Gentleman intended to bring forward, that had a tendency to quiet the minds of the people of Ireland. He wiſhed to know what effect the meaſure of one Parliament for both countries could have, in allaying the diſturbances that exiſted in the ſiſter kingdom. He deprecated the idea of the Houſe proceeding upon the adoption of ſuch a meaſure, becauſe in the interval between the period of theſe reſolutions being agreed to by the Iriſh Legiſlature, a continual jealouſy would exiſt againſt the Britiſh Parliament. If the meaſure ſhould be agreed to by the Iriſh Parliament, he would then conſider it his duty to go into the full conſideration of it. He ſaw no importance in the arguments that had been advanced relative to the increaſe of commercial proſperity which Ireland ſhould derive from

the

the Union. The commerce of that country had been doubled in the courſe of five years, and was now rapidly encreaſing; but he would not ſay that this aroſe out of the independence acquired by Ireland, in 1782, as had been argued by ſome Gentlemen, any more than he would admit the other argument, that the preſent proſperity of Scotland was owing to the Union. The commercial proſperity of theſe kingdoms might proceed from a variety of other cauſes; and therefore it was abſurd to aſcribe them to any ſingle one. It had been ſaid, that the introduction of Engliſh capital into Ireland would be a great advantage to that country; but it ought to be conſidered that this advantage would only be local; it might not extend beyond the city of Cork, which from an expectation of profiting by an Union, had ſtood forward in its ſupport. Conſidering himſelf, in caſe an Union exiſted, as a Member of the Imperial Legiſlature of both countries, he muſt declare, that he ſhould then look upon ſuch a partial introduction of capital rather as a diſadvantage, inaſmuch as it would not tend to the general benefit of the country; and the commerce of the place enjoying that advantage would be more expoſed to the attacks of the enemy than it was at preſent. It was evident, that a town lying upon the Southren, or ſouth eaſtern coaſt of Ireland, was more eaſily acceſſible to the enemy, and would require a great expence to guard its commerce. He would next beg leave to ſay a word or two reſpecting the reſolution of 1782. There was a great and excellent perſon (Mr. Burke) who was a friend to Ireland and to human kind; he believed that that perſon had been concerned in bringing forward this reſolution; who certainly meant nothing more by it than ſomething in the way of explanation, and of the ſame nature with that which Mr. Grattan had preſented to the Iriſh Houſe, namely—"That in all great queſtions of peace or war, England and Ireland ſhould ſtand or fall together." But that reſolution never meant, nor pointed at any thing like an Union. It was proper for him next to conſider what effect ſuch a meaſure would produce upon England as well as Ireland. He could ſee no advantages likely to ariſe to this country from the Union, that would equal or compenſate for the evils, that ſhould thereby be done to its conſtitution. He had often been ſurpriſed to ſee how well the Britiſh Houſe of Commons, as it was now conſtituted, had embraced and practiſed all the various intereſts of the different orders of ſociety; and had in fact all the advantages which the fineſt theory could ſuggeſt. But it was impoſſible to ſay what change it might undergo, upon the introduction of ſuch a body into the repreſentation as that from Ireland muſt form. If a ſmall body had any local intereſts to carry, it was evident that they would for that puepoſe combine very cloſely together; and if a conſiderable number of Members ſhould come from Ireland, and form a part of our Legiſlature, it would be natural for them, and indeed it would be a duty they ſhould owe their country to combine cloſely together for the purpoſe of carrying any queſtion in which the local advantages of Ireland might be involved. As the two Legiſlatures now ſtood, the different intereſts were eaſily balanced, by means of that influence which the crown poſſeſſed, and which, in his opinion, ought always to belong to the Executive

Government;

Government; but it was very clear that this influence could not have the ſame controul, after the introduction of a number of Members from Ireland, as it had at preſent. The ſame danger had been apprehended at the time of the Union with Scotland; but it was not likely to happen, on account of the ſmall number of Members that were to be introduced; but upon the introduction of ſo large a body from Ireland, the Conſtitution muſt certainly be ſhaken. Beſides, there was another conſideration not unworthy the attention of Gentlemen; ſuch a number of Members coming from Ireland, would greatly embarraſs the Debates of that Houſe." After a variety of excellent remarks on the probable effect of the meaſure, Dr. Lawrence concluded with obſerving, that as the preſent queſtion had a tendency to encreaſe the diſguſts and diſcontents of the Iriſh, and to render them more jealous of this Country, he wiſhed that it might go no farther, and upon that principle he muſt oppoſe the Speaker's leaving the Chair. But if it was determined that the Houſe ſhould go into a Committee, he would think it his duty to proceed with them in the conſideration of the reſolutions.

The Houſe then divided:

For the Speaker's leaving the Chair 140
Againſt it - - - - - - - - 15—Majority 125

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND,

Auguſt 12, 1785.

——— *The Chancellor of the Exchequer* [Mr. FOSTER] ſeconded the motion *, and reſumed. To ſuch wretched ſhifts are gentlemen driven, who attempt to ſupport what is not ſupportable, and would vainly endeavour to perſuade you that this meaſure trenches on the independence of our legiſlature; you need not adopt any laws that Great Britain may paſs for the regulation of commerce; if you do not approve them, you may reject them whenever you think proper; you do but reject the benefit of the condition, and return to the ſituation in which you now are; but the ſame Member has proved moſt ſtrongly the neceſſity of introducing the Bill, for when ſuch abilities as his can totally miſconceive its tendency, it ought to be introduced, in order to be fully underſtood. He has obſerved largely on each Propoſition, and nothing was ever ſo miſtated, miſrepreſented and miſunderſtood, as every part of them has been by him. It would be abſurd to follow him through all his errors, many of them the moſt ignorant child would be aſhamed to advance; but I will point out a few, not perhaps ſo obvious without examination.

* "That leave be given to bring in a Bill, for effectuating the intercourſe and commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, on permanent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of both Kingdoms."

Let me firſt take notice of his having alluded to me, and ſaid, that I voted againſt a declaration of Rights. I deny it; I declared my opinion of the independence of our legiſlature from this very ſeat, early in the debate on that day; but did *he* vote for it? *He did not*, and I repeat the Hon. Gentleman did not vote for it, but lamented that the ſubject had been brought in that day.

————I ſhall leave this ſubject as a leſſon to the Hon. Gentleman, never for the future to charge facts that are unfounded. I ſhall now proceed to the Hon. Gentleman's obſervations. He ſays "mark the cunning with which the reſolutions are drawn, to the "injury of Ireland; there is no new prohibition to be allowed on "the import from one country to another." This is certainly a great evil, eſpecially if we conſider that the Exportation of Iriſh products to England amounts to TWO MILLIONS and an HALF annually—and the Exportation of Britiſh products to Ireland amount but to ONE MILLION, ſo it is injurious to a country which may by prohibition loſe two millions and an half, to ſtipulate againſt prohibitions, and the country that ſends more than ſhe takes, is not wiſe in guarding againſt mutual prohibition.

Another diſcovery the Hon. Gentleman has made is that countervailing duties are unfair—why? Becauſe the Brewery of Ireland will thereby be effectually protected. The Hon. Gentleman complains of the Report of the Engliſh Privy Council, who ſay that to put Ireland and England on a footing of exact reciprocity as to linen, Ireland ought to give a bounty on the exportation of Engliſh Linens, becauſe England gives a bounty on the exportation of Iriſh Linens. Can any thing be more juſt? Yet England makes no ſuch demand, but is ready by this adjuſtment to give additional ſecurity to our Linen trade for ever. If indeed the adjuſtment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cauſe for rejecting it; but as it for ever confirms all the advantages we derive from our Linen trade, and binds England from making any law that can be injurious to it; ſurely Gentlemen who regard that trade, and whoſe fortunes and rent depend on its proſperity, will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.

Another of his curious objections is, that as we have not a navy of our own, and if we aſſiſt the navy of the empire, England will turn that navy to her own ambitious purpoſes. To what ambitious purpoſes? To the protection of that commerce and of thoſe colonies which are now to become ours.—In the moment that ſhe gives up her monopoly of colonies, ſhe is accuſed of ambitious purpoſes, for her ſeparate aggrandizement.

The Hon. Gentleman complains, that the Bill now before the Engliſh Parliament makes it neceſſary that every proper and authentic document to prevent ſmuggling ſhould be ſent by the revenue officers of this country with any foreign or plantation goods ſent from hence to England, but that the ſame precaution is not taken with regard to the ſame kind of goods ſent from England to Ireland. This is the ſtrongeſt argument for waiting the introduction of the Iriſh Bill; it ſpeaks the conſciouſneſs of the Engliſh Parliament, that they could not preſcribe to our revenue officers what documents ſhould be ſatisfactory to them on receiving goods

from

from England, but that the Iriſh Parliament alone in their own Bill, could determine that matter. It ſhews the Hon. Gentleman to be totally ignorant of what either is or ought to be the ſubſtance of the Bill.

The Hon. Gentleman talks of bounties, and ſays, by aboliſhing bounties, we ſhall no longer be able to bring corn to this city; our inland corn bounties, he ſays, are to be turned into Protecting Duties for England. A ſtrange conception! But why has he fixed on corn and flour? If he had read the Reſolution on which he is arguing, he would have ſeen that corn and flour are every where exempted.

Another argument of the Hon. Gentleman is, that the declaring that neither country hereafter can lay any new prohibition on native productions, implies cunningly that it may on foreign. What an argument! when the very firſt principles of the ſyſtem is, that a mutual interchange of foreign commodities is for ever to take place between the two kingdoms, and one even of the Twenty Propoſitions declares it in preciſe terms—But, the Hon. Gentleman talks of prohibitions on exports, &c. Would the Hon. Gentleman wiſh to leave it in the power of either nation to prohibit their native commodities from being exported to the other? would he wiſh to leave it in the power of England to prohibit the exportation of coals, ſalt, iron, bark, hops, and many other articles, or to raiſe a revenue on theſe articles when exported hither.

The Hon. Gentleman talks particularly of wool. I admit, if you balance wool againſt wool, that his argument is right; but the juſt way is to balance the whole of the exports;—England engages never to prohibit the export of articles which are neceſſary almoſt to our exiſtence, and we engage not to prohibit the export of articles which bring us in 500,000l. a year. We are to engage not to prohibit the export of Woollen and Linen Yarn, which we have exported for a whole century, and without keeping a market for the redundancy of which by export, we could *not* enſure plenty for our own manufactures.

The Gentleman too totally miſtates the caſe of patents and copy-rights. Britiſh patents and copy-rights are protected in Britain by prohibition againſt import. The Reſolutions ſay to us, "protect your's in like manner;" a meaſure never yet adopted here, which muſt promote genius, printing, and invention in Ireland.

I am aſhamed, Sir, of taking up ſo much of your time on a ſubject which might be ſo eaſily underſtood by the loweſt capacity; I ſhall therefore quit the Hon. Gentleman and come to the queſtion of conſtitution, which I do not at all think involved in this ſubject. If Great Britain grants us a full partnerſhip in all her trade, in all her colonies, if ſhe admits us to a full participation in the benefits of her Navigation laws, by which ſhe has raiſed herſelf to be the greateſt commercial power in the world, if ſhe does not call upon us to contribute to the expence of the partnerſhip, but merely to receive our ſhare of the profits, and ſays, we may continue in that partnerſhip only ſo long as we chuſe, can any man ſay, the conditions of it amount to a

ſurrender

ſurrender of our legiſlature? ſurely not, it is idle ſpeculation. Let us then look at the ſubject, free from all imaginary dread for the conſtitution.

Britain imports annually from us 2,500,000l. of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about 1,000,000l. of hers, and raiſe a revenue on almoſt every article of it, and reſerve the power of continuing that revenue. She exports to us ſalt for our fiſheries and proviſions; hops which we cannot grow; coals which we cannot raiſe; tin which we have not; and bark which we cannot get elſewhere; and all theſe without reſerving any duty, or a power to impoſe any on them; though her own ſubjects pay 2, 3, or 4s. a chaldron for her own coals, ſent coaſtways, and in London 7s. We on the contrary charge a duty for our own uſe here on almoſt every article we ſend to her. So much for exports; now as to bounties, ſhe almoſt ruined our manufacture of ſail-cloth, by bounties on export of her own to Ireland. In 1750, or thereabouts, when her bounty commenced, we exported more than we imported, and in 1784, we exported none, and imported 180,000 yards; ſhe now withdraws that bounty. And let me digreſs here a little on ſail-cloth, which although gentlemen affect to deſpiſe when mentioned, will I truſt be an immediate ſource of wealth by this adjuſtment. For 1. This bounty is to be removed. 2. The export of ſail-cloth to the Indies is to be allowed, and Great Britain exported there, in 1782, about 200,000 ells. 3. There is a Britiſh law, obliging every Britiſh and colony ſhip to have its firſt ſuits of Britiſh ſail-cloth. Iriſh now is to be deemed Britiſh. 4. There is a preference of 2d. an ell given by Britiſh law to Britiſh ſail cloth, over foreign, for the Britiſh navy. Iriſh is now to have the ſame preference. 5. The ſurplus of the hereditary revenue is to be applied in the firſt place to the purchaſe of Iriſh ſail cloth. All theſe give a glorious proſpect for that valuable manufacture—But to return, were a man to look for the country moſt advantageous to ſettle manufacture in, what would be his choice? One where labour and proviſions are cheap, that is Ireland; and what he would next look for?—why to have a rich, extended and ſteady market near him, which England, ſtretched along-ſide affords, and to eſtabliſh that market for this country is one great object of this ſyſtem. Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of Britiſh duties on our manufactures; I agree with them it may not operate ſoon, but we are to look forward in a final ſettlement, and it is impoſſible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we muſt be able to ſell to them. When commercial jealouſy ſhall be baniſhed by final ſettlement, and trade take its natural and ſteady courſe, the kingdoms will ceaſe to look to rivalſhip, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapeſt, and buy from the other what it cannot make ſo advantageouſly. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by duties, bounties, jealouſies or legiſlative interference from its natural and beneficial courſe, this ſyſtem will attain its real object, conſolidating the ſtrength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communica-

tions

tions of their market among themſelves, with preference to every part againſt all ſtrangers.

I need not mention the Navigation-act, the proper benefits of which we have ſo long looked for; I will only obſerve, that Great Britain could never agree to receive the Britiſh Colonies' goods from us, unleſs we prohibited the goods of foreign Colonies as ſhe does, which is a powerful argument for that part of the ſyſtem againſt the conſtitutional phrenſy that threatens it. Let us alſo obſerve, that now, for the firſt time, Great Britain offers us a right for ever in all preſent and future Colonies, without any reſervation of power, to call on us either to procure, ſupport, or preſerve them; *ſhe* maintains them, *we* ſhare all the profits; and, not only their goods, but all goods of Iriſh produce, are to paſs through Britain duty free. Can foreign nations, after this is ſettled, make diſtinction between Britiſh and Iriſh goods? Our manufactures will be united as our intereſts, and we ſhall laugh at Portugal folly.

I could run out for hours into the many benefits of this ſyſtem but I have tired the Houſe too long; let me only implore you not to reject this meaſure, for ill-founded, viſionary objections, or to ſacrifice realities to ſhadows. If this infatuated country gives up the preſent offer, ſhe may look for it again in vain, things cannot remain as they are; commercial jealouſy is rouſed, it will increaſe with two independent legiſlatures, if they don't mutually declare the principles whereby their powers ſhall be ſeparately employed, in directing the common concerns of trade; and without an united intereſt of commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many ſhocks, and ſeparation of intereſts muſt threaten ſeparation of connexion, which every honeſt Iriſhman muſt ſhudder ever to look at as a poſſible event.

I will only add, that if this meaſure be refuſed, Ireland will receive more ſolid injury than from any other evil that ever befel her; it is in vain for Gentlemen to think we can go on as we have done for ſome years—or to expect to cope with England in a deſtructive war of bounties—our ſituation muſt every day become more difficult, and it is impoſſible to foreſee all the ruinous conſequences that may enſue. — — — — —

AUGUST 15th, 1785.

Right Hon. *Chancellor of the Exchequer* [Mr. FOSTER.] I riſe to ſtate the miſconception of the Right Hon. Gentleman, and if any thing can ſhew the neceſſity of curing the people of their infatuation, by publiſhing and explaining the Bill to them, it ſurely is this, that a Gentleman to whom the look up, and juſtly look, as one whoſe wiſdom and virtue will guard their rights, is ſo very much miſtaken.

The Right Hon. Gentleman in his argument has never once adverted to the Bill on your table, but draws all his concluſions from arguments raiſed by his own imagination, on the Britiſh Reſolutions. He dwells now only on foreign Colony trade and Navigation laws; the accepting a full participation of the Britiſh Colony trade, upon terms of equal laws, he gives up as not altering our conſtitution, and

and he even agrees in the innocence of our declaring it as a principle of the treaty. In this he has ſhewn his wiſdom, for it is already declared in the law of Ireland. The objection then ſtands as to a foreign Colony trade, and what ſays the Bill, it declares it to be a condition of the treaty, to protect that trade, in the ſame manner as Britain does, againſt the interference of foreign Colony goods. It enacts nothing, and there is the mighty evil which we have introduced, that is to give to Britain the regulation of all our foreign trade with Portugal, with Spain, with all the world. If the Gentleman ſo egregiouſly miſtakes the purport of what he has not read, I truſt the good ſenſe of the nation will ſee his miſtakes and judge for themſelves; but the objections to an agreement of rating only the goods from foreign Colonies, ſo far only as by protecting our Colonies againſt them, is not ſo wonderful from him as his objection to the Bill's affecting Navigation and Britiſh ſeamen in general; from him I ſay, for in the year 1782 the Right Hon. Gentleman introduced, in conjunction with the late Chief Baron Burgh, and the preſent Chief Baron Yelverton, a Bill, adopting in the groſs all ſuch clauſes and proviſions of the laws theretofore paſſed in England, as conveyed equal benefits and impoſed equal reſtrictions in commerce, in the moſt extended ſenſe, to the ſubjects of both countries, and alſo putting the ſeamen of Ireland on the footing of Britiſh ſeamen. [*The Chancellor here read the words.*] The Bill now brought in does not go ſo far; he went to commerce in general, and adopted laws without reference to them, or even reciting their title. What does this Bill do? it declares with him the principle; it does no more. This Bill declares for a *ſimilarity of laws, manners*, and *cuſtoms*, in toto. Our Bill declares for a ſimilarity of Navigation laws, on our accepting the benefit of the Britiſh, not for the firſt time offered to us. It is idle to believe, even his authority can have weight in ſuch unfounded objections: nay, *our* Bill reaches *his*, to adopt its principles, and he ſays ours is miſchievous; his was the glory of the nation and the joint labour of the greateſt friends of liberty.

The Right Hon. Gentleman ſays, "we might have foreign trade, "without entering into the meaſure, and that England, as to fo-"reign trade, gives us no right which we already have not." As to colony trade, he ſays, "ſhe gives us what we had before, on "the former conditions, that we give her Colony product a prefer-"ence in our market, and therefore, he ſays, cannot we remain as "we now are."

With reſpect to the Colony Trade, I anſwer, we hold it by the gift of Britain, and ſhe may repeal her act, and reaſſume her monopoly. As to foreign trade, I have ſhewn it is no way affected, except by the preference to be given to Britiſh Colony goods, againſt thoſe of foreign Colonies; but why does the gentleman allude to Portugal? it is the ſtrongeſt meaſure againſt him. Portugal has preſumed to diſtinguiſh between the goods of Great Britain and the goods of Ireland—ſhe will not receive the latter. But if this ſettlement is entered into, all our goods ſhe can have may go duty free through Britain. The diſtinction between Britiſh and Iriſh manufacture is loſt as to foreign nations, our goods, are made one, phyſically

ſically as well as politically, in reſpect to foreign, and our union cemented by the freedom of intercourſe.

The honourable gentleman ſeems, with others, to undervalue the Britiſh markets for our linens, and that if Britain ſhall diſcourage her import, they will find vent elſewhere, I will not pay him ſo fulſome a compliment as to ſay he underſtands commerce, his genius ſoars perhaps above ſuch reading; but if he did underſtand it, I would aſk him, where would he expect a market to favour the linens of Ireland? Where will he find a market under Heaven for that manufacture, which now brings two millions annually into the kingdom? Will Portugal take them? Will Spain take them? Will France take them? No; we know they will not. Will Ruſſia, Germany, or Holland take them? They are your powerful rivals, and able to underſel you. Where then will you find a market, if England ſhuts her ports? Will you go to the Weſt Indies?—you cannot go to the Engliſh Colonies—they will be like Britain—there you can have no admittance. The French, Spaniſh, and Portugueſe have ſhut their ports long ſince—your only market then is in the *bankrupt* States of North America, that have not money to pay their juſt debts, and many provinces of which, if they had the money, have not perhaps the honeſty to do it

This bankrupt country is to give you the market Britain affords. No, no; cheriſh the market you have, you will never get ſo good, ſhe ever exports with bounty for you. And here let me obſerve the beneſits of exporting, duty free, all our fabrics through her ports, which this ſettlement ſecures. You firſt found the way for your linens to foreign places through her ports, by her capitals and extent of dealing;—do not refuſe the like for your other fabrics—the proſperity of the linen ſhould teach you.

The gentleman ſays England is as dependant on Ireland as Ireland is on England for her products—he inſtances the cotton yarn and other yarn of Ireland. What, call cotton yarn a fabric of Ireland, and an export to Britain!—It is a miſtake of his expreſſion, he cannot be ſo ignorant of our manafactures Let us look into the wants Britain ſupplies—I will take coals firſt.

Do you think it an object of no conſequence to receive coals from England, for ever, duty free while, the duties on coals in England, brought from one of her own ports to another is very high. I remember when I propoſed a ſhilling a ton on the importation of coals into Dublin only, in order to raiſe a fund for extending and beautifying the city, it met with great oppoſition; I was abuſed in all the news papers; yet now England may raiſe four times that ſum upon the export of her coals, which will fall upon the conſumer, and raiſe a revenue for her advantage; nay were ſhe even to raiſe the revenue on them to you that ſhe does on her own coaſt carriage, what would become of you? You have not Iriſh coal; if the preſent bounty of 2s. a ton to Dublin, added to 1s 8d. duty on Britiſh, which operates as 3s. 8d. in favour of Iriſh coal, what will you do; becauſe no carriage can be ſo cheap to you as that acroſs the channel. Rock ſalt is the next;—Where will

will you get it? (ſome one ſaid from Spain) Rock ſalt from Spain! The gentleman ſhould inform himſelf a little better.

As to the tanning-trade, where will you get bark? From no place in the world but England. We know that it would not bear the freight from any other, and if England was to prohibit the export of it, that trade muſt be at an end; and we muſt not forget, that the Britiſh manufacturers of leather have already complained, that by getting bark from Wales, we are enabled to work on as good terms as England.

Let him look to hops; will this country grow them? On the other hand, what wants do we ſupply for England? wool and linen yarn, to our own great advantage; but it is in vain to proceed; the Houſe muſt ſee we are talking of a ſubject not yet underſtood; when known, and Ireland unprejudiced and in her calm reaſon, will never reject the many bleſſings it holds out to her trade;—it gives wealth and ſecurity which I truſt will never be refuſed from a wild imagination of Utopian Republics, Commonwealths, Monarchies—God knows what.

I will ſtand or fall with the Bill, that not a line in it touches your Conſtitution; it is now left to the deciſion of the country, it is not abandoned, God forbid it ſhould; and I truſt I ſhall ſee the nation aſk it at our hands, that we may be able then to obtain it ſhall be my prayers—the Miniſter cannot promiſe—he has done his duty—and it will be my pride at a future day, when its real value ſhall be known, that I bore a leading ſhare in the tranſaction—that I laboured to procure for Ireland ſolid and ſubſtantial benefits, which even two years ago no man had an idea of even looking to.

FINIS.

30412